

# Clans and Democracy: A Mismatch?

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Boston College Electronic Thesis or Dissertation, 2007

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CLANS AND DEMOCRACY: A MISMATCH?

By

Meaghan Krupa

Submitted to the International Studies Program in partial fulfillment

of graduation requirements for the degree of

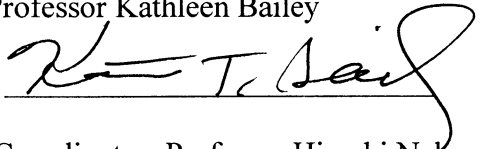
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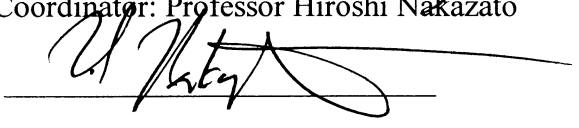
International Studies Program

May 2007

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## **Abstract**

Clans are often viewed anachronistically in a world characterized by globalization. Yet, recent research highlights that clans not only determine how societies function, but play a central political role in many parts of the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia. My analysis focuses on exploring clan alliances and their affect on the international system through the case of Uzbekistan. *Clans and Democracy: A Mismatch?* explores the presence of clans in Uzbekistan, deciphers to what extent they remain involved in politics, and determines how clan politics affects Uzbekistan's future prospects for democratization. I conclude that clans continue to influence the political decision-making of the state and ultimately hinder democracy formation. In closing, I explore predications for the future stability and democracy of Uzbekistan, as well as suggest policy prescriptions for the United States vis-à-vis Uzbekistan and other clan-based states.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Professor Kathleen Bailey, who has inspired me to study this region of the world. Before enrolling in Professor Bailey's Fundamentals of Politics course freshmen year, I had never even heard of Uzbekistan or the other four Central Asian states. Now, I have not only finished my first large research project, but I am planning on dedicating my future towards educating others of the developing political, economic, and social situation in Uzbekistan. Professor Bailey is such an academic and personal role model of mine, and her guidance has been a great source of inspiration.

I would like to thank my parents, my sister Bethany, and my Grammy. My parents raised me in an environment of love, and taught me through their action the values of hard-work and endless dedication. It is through my parents' compassion for others that has inspired me to want to be a voice for the oppressed and marginalized in our global society. David, thank you for always being so supportive and encouraging. You truly inspire me in so many ways.

I would also like to extend a thank you to Mrs. Cindy Perry at Portsmouth High School, and also Professors Paul Christensen, Hiroshi Nakazato, and Donald Hafner for providing inspiration and guidance during my four years at Boston College.

## **Introduction**

### **Insight into the Instability Sown By Clans**

In 2005, twenty-three businessmen loyal to Kobiljon Obidov, the impeached governor of Andijan, Uzbekistan, were arrested, jailed, and charged with being members of the radical Islamic group, Akramiya. Supporters of the twenty-three jailed men gathered for several days outside the courtroom, quietly protesting the trial. On May 12<sup>th</sup>, armed individuals attempted and failed to free the twenty-three prisoners, and on May 13<sup>th</sup>, thousands of supporters came to Andijan to peacefully demonstrate for their release. Things quickly escalated into violence when government forces began firing on the large crowd. Death toll estimates range from one-hundred and seventy to one thousand deaths. The day following the massacre, President Islam Karimov warned the population that “a bullet will not choose who it shoots,” illustrating his support for the massacre and reiterating his authority over the state.<sup>1</sup>

While the arrest of the twenty-three entrepreneurs, fear of Islamic radicalism, and desolate economic and social conditions have all been attributed as reasons for the demonstration and consequent massacre, the role that clans played in the massacre of Andijan must be considered. In May 2004, Kobiljon Obidov, the provincial governor, or hokim, of Andijan, was impeached and replaced by Saydullo Begaliyev. While the decision to remove Obidov was ultimately made by the regional legislature, Karimov is thought to have “engineered” the reshuffle.<sup>2</sup> This was a risky move, due to the fact that

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<sup>1</sup> Adolat Najimova. “Uzbekistan: President Karimov’s Limited Options” *EurasiaNet* May 21, 2005  
<<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp052105.shtml>> (October 25, 2006.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Obidov was heavily supported by his Ferghana clan, and Begaliyev represented another clan faction.<sup>3</sup> Once hokim, Begaliyev, a former Minister of Agriculture and Water, immediately purged Obidov's allies and cracked down on his supporters. These political developments, largely motivated by clan politics and regional alliances, were at the root of the massacre.<sup>4</sup> Begaliyev's crackdown led to the arrests of twenty-three businessmen who resisted, and the situation that followed quickly escalated into chaos. The massacre at Andijan highlights the instability and disorder that clan politics can reap within a society and illustrates the level of undemocratic development in Uzbekistan.

While Uzbek authorities continue to claim that Islamic radicalism was the root of the massacre at Andijan, a recent reshuffle of political leaders supports the theory that events were in fact brought about by the system of clan politics in Uzbekistan.<sup>5</sup> On October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006, Begaliyev was removed as governor of Andijon and Obidov was moved from house arrest into a Tashkent prison. Karimov then appointed his trusted Security Lieutenant Akhmad Usmanov as the new hokim of Andijan. Two-years after the massacre at Andijan and Uzbekistan's horrific display of state power, Karimov continues to engineer regional leadership in a way that subdues opposition and reinforces his own presidential power. Ultimately, this political maneuvering contributes to the instability and unpredictability of the region. Given Uzbekistan's rising importance on the international stage, clan politics need to be studied in order to understand how they

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<sup>3</sup> Joanna Lillis. "Political Purge in Uzbekistan Indicates President is 'Afraid of His Own Nation.'" EurasiaNet October 19, 2006 <[www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav101906.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav101906.shtml)> (October 24, 2006.)

<sup>4</sup> Najimova.

<sup>5</sup> Lillis.



function, how they influence the political decisions of the state, and how they color the future of the region.

### **Clan Infiltration**

Central Asia is a small and newly independent region dominated by clan politics. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, clans were able to reemerge as powerful actors within all five Central Asian states. In Uzbekistan, clan politics reasserted itself as a strong political force within the formal state structure. My thesis explores the presence of clans in Uzbekistan, decipher to what extent they remain involved in politics, and determine how clan politics affects Uzbekistan's future prospects for democratization. I address the following question: How does the long-established phenomenon of clans affect attempts at democratic development across the globe? On one hand, clans can be deemed small civil societies that may promote plurality and democracy. On the other hand, clans are traditional, insular, and opaque social groups that actually impede the establishment of democracy. I explore three possible scenarios surrounding clans and their influence on democracy in Uzbekistan: first, that they encourage democracy; secondly, that they impede democratic development; and lastly, that they neither support nor prevent the process of democratization.

### **Why Clans?**

This project is not only interesting for me, but it is a worthwhile subject in the realm of international relations. The pervasiveness of clan politics in Central Asia and other potentially volatile regions of the world present a diplomatic challenge for the United States. In many developing and transitional Middle Eastern, African, and Central

Asian societies, clans thrive as powerful social groups and influential political actors, increasingly affecting the political framework of interstate relations. The United States has vital economic and security interests in these areas of the world, and must learn to identify clans as important political actors. A deeper understanding of the dynamics and political influence of clans is necessary for democratic societies to forge stronger political relationships with clan-based states, and should guide the United States' policy decisions vis-à-vis clans in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

### **Why Uzbekistan?**

Central Asia is situated between relatively powerful Russia and China, and bordered by unpredictable Afghanistan and Iran. Uzbekistan, as the most powerful Central Asian state, is a potential political role model for promoting peaceful relations and positive change throughout the region. However, its authoritarian president and frequent manifestations of political and radical Islam make Uzbekistan's regional role disorderly and largely undemocratic. With its 2005 declaration of a political alliance with Russia, Uzbekistan has moved its diplomatic relations away from the United States and towards Russia. Despite this new Russian-Uzbek alliance, Uzbekistan, with its strategic geopolitical position, important resources, and highly educated population of almost twenty-eight million, is an area of security and economic interest for the United States. Furthermore, the current political system in Uzbekistan is dominated by clan politics and without incentives to change the current situation, Uzbekistan's future and democracy in the region remains quite uncertain in the face of potential clan-based power struggles.

### **Greater Applicability**

By exploring the influence of clans and their political role in Uzbekistan, my analysis will introduce and explain models that explore the establishment of clans in Central Asia, and how this phenomenon affects the modern international system. Uzbekistan presents a unique and important case of clan politics, yet researching Uzbekistan highlights common themes and leads to new insights applicable to clan-based societies worldwide. By studying clan politics in Uzbekistan, the United States can thwart a possible political and social power struggle that will not only affect Uzbekistan, but the entire Central Asian region. Through applying theories of clan-based societies to a variety of Middle Eastern and African states, relations within the international community can improve.

### **Research**

President Karimov has verbally discouraged clan politics, yet his actions and decisions often appear influenced by his own clan membership and the presence of competing clans within the formal state structure. While Karimov has repeatedly denounced the presence of clans within the national government, does he continue to informally represent his own Samarkand clan? Has Karimov's denunciations of clan alliances within the state led the government to make efforts to eliminate regional factions within the state structure, or do clans continue to facilitate decision-making within the state? There is no question that clans continue to function and thrive within Uzbekistan's social and political networks. However, how do I determine to what degree clans exist and deduce their impact on the government of Uzbekistan? I form

conclusions about how influential the three major regional clans, the Tashkent, Ferghana, and Samarkand clans, are within society through conducting original research in the form of an elite analysis.

While I am not discounting the role of ethnicity, social class, and/or religious affiliation as foundations for political decisions, these factors are excluded from my research on Uzbekistan's elite structure. I instead focus on determining each individual leader's clan affiliation and how this potentially influences his/her decision-making. I research each leader's biological as well as political age, birthplace, nationality, educational background (including level and place of education), previous experience and qualifications, current position, and tenure of office. Each of these variables helps determine the clan dynamic within the political leadership of Uzbekistan.

From this raw data, I analyze the elite system within the past five years, studying the trends about who is in power and how this power is derived. I determine where alliances lie and whether the major clans are adequately represented or significantly unbalanced. I look for obvious patterns and other indications of how clan directly influences policy-making, for example, lateral transfers, demotions and promotions, and impeachments that Karimov makes with clan-based motivations. The goal of my elite analysis is to make accurate deductions of the current leadership of Uzbekistan, offering primary research in the form of a statistical analysis that can be used in the future research of myself and of others within the academic community.

I complement my statistical analysis by exploring academic literature, websites translated into English, and academic journals and newspapers. These materials support

my investigation of clan politics in Uzbekistan and my determination of whether Uzbekistan's clan-based society meets the qualifications for democratization. In addition, I have kept current on events and developments taking place within the evolving political sphere, particularly the upcoming presidential election of 2007.

By exploring the work of Edward Schatz, "Modern Clan Politics: The Power of 'Blood' in Kazakhstan and Beyond," I have developed a strong background regarding the continuation of clans within the international system, particularly within the Central Asian states. This reading provides the framework to further explore the existence of clans in transitional and developing societies. By expanding on Schatz's study, I draw conclusions about the characteristics, persistence, and future effects of clans in Uzbekistan. I expand my knowledge of clan-based societies through the studies of both Kathleen Bailey and Kathleen Collins, who specialize in clan politics and its effects in Central Asia. By studying their research and analyzing their conclusions, I have developed a broader understanding of clan groups and the dynamics of clan politics within the Uzbek state.

To develop a greater understanding of the general qualifications needed to democratize, I read literature on the various methods of democratization and the necessary transformations that democratizing societies undergo. By exploring Samuel Huntington's "Political Order in Changing Societies," and other works on the subject, I deduce my own conclusions about the viability of democracy within clan-based societies. Through analyzing the effects of democracy in transitional societies, I determine the

influence that clan politics has on the future democratization of clan-based states within the international system.

I then narrow my research to clan dynamics and existing arguments about clans' effect on democratization in Uzbekistan. I determine whether they have the sufficient social capital to implement democracy, or if they simply reinforce ties and loyalties that are hostile to democracy. I explore Bailey's theory that clans impede the nation-building necessary for democratic development. I look at Collins' deduction that clan cooperation can increase the stability of the state, but does not encourage the formation of democracy. After studying both perspectives, and clans overall influence on the current political climate of Uzbekistan, I deduce my own conclusion about Uzbekistan's prospects for democracy within the current international environment.

### **Research Design**

Chapter One further introduces the research question being explored and includes a literature review of relative theories and models. Chapter Two is background information on clans and how they function specifically within Uzbekistan. By studying the benefits and drawbacks of clans within society, I search to determine what makes this unusual social and political presence persevere. Ultimately, I determine if clan systems are a social necessity that should be encouraged, a social good that should be reformed, or an unnecessary tradition that should be abolished. Chapter Three discusses Uzbekistan as an autonomous government. In Chapter Four, I search to determine the situation that clan politics present for an authoritarian, recently independent state within the larger international system.

I also draw conclusions about the effect that clan politics has on attempts for the future democratization of Uzbekistan. Is it possible that clans can be used as vehicles to democratize, or is their existence antithetical to the ideals and values of democratic government? I search to determine whether clans have the social capital, the influence, and the will to promote participation in politics alongside democratic values and institutions. I explore whether clan-based politics can overcome the corruption, backwardness, and powerful allegiance it supports in order to foster democracy. Ultimately, I decide whether kin and fictive kin relations can be surpassed to foster a democratic government, or whether democracy is antithetical to a clan-based society.

Chapter Four reveals the results of my statistical analysis of Uzbekistan's current elite and a content analysis of political officials' speeches and statements. I include any explanations, deductions and extrapolations that my research provides about clan influence within the formal state structure. I deduce the effect that clan groups have on the political infrastructure of Uzbekistan and determine to what degree clan politics remain a decisive factor in current Uzbek affairs.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I apply what I have learned about clans' influence within Uzbekistan's political system and on future attempts for democracy to make predictions about the state's future development and global integration. After determining whether or not clans are beneficial or necessary for society, I explore whether the international community should encourage or discourage their existence in Uzbekistan. After studying the inner-workings of the Uzbek political system, and clans' pervasiveness within that structure, I deduce how the United States should frame its policies with regard to clan

societies, Uzbekistan in particular. I make sensible suggestions of how non-clan and clan-based states should aim to interact and gain concessions from each other. I conclude my thesis with diplomatic measures and policy prescriptions to guide the United States' and other international powers' decision-making when seeking to democratize the Middle East and other clan-based societies. With any luck, these proposals will help prevent the potentially problematic situation caused by the presence and continuation of clan politics.

### **Conclusion**

In the past, clans have infiltrated societies and political systems, causing and contributing to civil unrest, violence, and, in Uzbekistan, a peaceful demonstration on May 13<sup>th</sup> turned deadly. President Karimov's second consecutive presidential term ended on January 22, 2006 and the next presidential election is planned for December 23, 2007. This makes a study of clans and their influence on Uzbekistan's political system even more vital in the event of a possible succession struggle. If powerful clan leaders seek office, either through election or appointment by Karimov, clan politics and its effects will continue to infiltrate the state and could lead to dire consequences for Uzbekistan and the entire Central Asian region. It is important that the international community realize the influence of clan allegiances in an effort to stabilize the region, before another massacre like Andijan occurs.



## **Chapter 1**

### **A New Outlook on Clan Theory**

Clans are often viewed anachronistically in a world characterized by globalization. Yet, recent research highlights that clans not only determine how societies function, but play a central political role in many parts of the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia. Despite this, clans are often overlooked when studying the international system. As interactions increase within the global community, it is important to realize what constitutes a clan in order to build better relations between clan and non-clan based societies. Kathleen Collins, one of the leading experts on clan studies in Central Asia, notes that “clans remain a salient everyday reality.”<sup>1</sup> This analysis will focus on exploring existing studies of clan alliances and their effect on an international system that encourages nation-building and promotes democracy.

#### **Do clans still exist?**

Much clan-based literature exists, studying clans’ historical ties and their strong foundation within economic, political, and social systems. Clans, as well-established informal networks, are central to understanding the foundations and motivations of current political structures throughout the world. Often, the role of clans in politics is overlooked while factors such as religion, ethnicity, and history are emphasized. However, in “Modern Clan Politics: The Power of ‘Blood’ in Kazakhstan and Beyond,” Edward Schatz discusses his recent investigation of clans in Central Asia, particularly in Kyrgyzstan, and his findings that “clan divisions continue to animate power relations in a

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<sup>1</sup> Kathleen Collins, “Clan, Pacts, and Politics,” Journal of Democracy, 13. 3, 2002: 142.

wide array of contexts.”<sup>2</sup> Other leading scholars in the field of Central Asian clans, such as Kathleen Bailey and Kathleen Collins, as well as scholars studying the Middle East and Africa, such as Dale Eickelman and Barnett Rubin, emphasize the central role of clans as powerful regional groups that provide a key source of social and political identity. Jack Snyder notes that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Tajikistan all “fell victim to conflict, penetration, and loss of sovereignty because their incoherent state structures failed to knit together internal clans, regions, or ‘mafia’ factions.”<sup>3</sup> This study bypasses arguments focused on Islam and ethnicity, and focuses on clans’ centrality within society and their ability to negatively impede nation-building and democracy.

### **What is a clan?**

A clan is a “subethnic” group that is based on more than just language, religion, consanguinity, ethnicity, or culture.<sup>4</sup> Olivier Roy defines clan as a “solidarity group or ‘grouped habitats of families having links with each other.’”<sup>5</sup> While sharing certain characteristics, clan systems are not synonymous with clientelism, localism, or the oligarchies existing within the Former Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> Anita Sengupta argues that clans in Central Asia represent “geographically based factions among the elite.”<sup>7</sup> Collins, who

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics: The Power of “Blood” in Kazakhstan and Beyond*. (Seattle: Washington University Press, 2004) ix.

<sup>3</sup> Jack Snyder, “Introduction: Reconstructing Politics amidst the Wreckage of Empire,” In Barnett R. Rubin and Jack Snyder, eds., *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State-Building*, (New York: Routledge, 1998) 11.

<sup>4</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 143.

<sup>5</sup> Kathleen Bailey, *Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston College, Boston, Massachusetts), 39.

<sup>6</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 143.

<sup>7</sup> Anita Sengupta, *The Formation of the Uzbek Nation-State: A Study in Transition*. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003) 285.

spent much time in Central Asia, offers the most applicable definition of clans in the Central Asian region.

A clan is an informal social institution in which actual or notional kinship based on blood or marriage forms the central bond among members. Clans are identity networks consisting of an extensive web of horizontal and vertical kin-based relations. Clans have their roots in a culture of kin-based norms and trust that makes rational sense, particularly amid the semi-modern economies of Central Asia.<sup>8</sup>

Collins further explains that clans are horizontal in their “capacity to bind members through relations of mutual trust,” and vertical because they “include both elite and nonelite members from different levels of society and the state.”<sup>9</sup> As a result, clans surpass formal networks and institutions in order to connect society through mutual reliance and trust.

Dale Eickelman studies clans in the context of the Middle East and Central Asia using an anthropological approach, and has discovered that many people have “overlooked the subtle, ‘informal’ forces that provide the basis for civic order” in the Middle East.<sup>10</sup> His research has revealed that, while “understanding the formal structure of ‘central’ institutions, such as the state, is essential...so is understanding the role of competing and complementary institutions from the political ‘periphery.’”<sup>11</sup> In the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia, informal ties often saturate the political system. That is why this study seeks to explore the case of Uzbekistan, while offering a clan

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<sup>8</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 142.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Dale Eickelman, *The Middle East and Central Asia: An Anthropological Approach*, (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1998) 330.

<sup>1111</sup> *Ibid.*, 331.

study applicable to Central Asia and a solid theoretical foundation to study other clan-based societies of the world.

### **Why do clans still exist?**

Many researchers acknowledge that clans exist today, and study why clans have retained much of their importance, despite powerful forces of modernization and globalization within the international system. Often, in areas of the world where economic uncertainty and political instability dominate, individuals turn towards the informal networks and mutual trust that clan relations provide. Informal factions like clans often lead to an intense “group feeling”<sup>12</sup> that is not based solely on ties of sanguinity. This feeling creates an atmosphere of “trust and a sense of reciprocity,”<sup>13</sup> particularly when difficulties and challenges arise. Eickelman describes a concept of “closeness” existing in Morocco that is “constituted by compelling ties of obligations.”<sup>14</sup> This “closeness” eventually leads to assimilation, where people act “‘as if’ they were related to one another.”<sup>15</sup> These familial-feeling relations of “notional kinship” are convenient and powerful, and often supersede the influence of state institutions.<sup>16</sup>

According to Collins, reliance on clan networks is especially efficient in reducing the “high transaction costs of making deals in an environment where impersonal institutions are weak or absent and stable expectations are hard to form.”<sup>17</sup> Particularly with an abrupt transition from domination or colonization to independence, clans offer an

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>13</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 142.

<sup>14</sup> Eickelman, 153.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>16</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 142.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

attractive alternate to an unstable state that lacks the adequate resources.<sup>18</sup> Often, a state does not have the authority to combat the presence of clans due to their informal and subversive nature. In her article “Melting pot, salad bowl—cauldron?,” Shirin Akiner highlights that clans can “either lie dormant, or be activated and manipulated, according to the requirements of the situation” because informal identities are “more fluid and negotiable than the formal nationalities” of states.<sup>19</sup> In Afghanistan, the influence derived by solidarity groups, or qawms, is possible without forming “nationwide alliances to capture and exercise power.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, Afghanistan has a history where each qawm was isolated and “linked to the nation-state only through personal ties to individuals in the government.”<sup>21</sup> In Morocco, Schatz observes that “subethnic divisions are seen to reside beyond the reach of the state apparatus—in what Moroccan authorities called the ‘zone of dissidence,’ over which the state has little control.”<sup>22</sup> In Central Asia, clan networks provide for the people and surpass formal networks, reducing the “role of parties and the role of the state in distributing resources, jobs, and social benefits.”<sup>23</sup> Clans provide what weak states cannot, making them an enduring and salient social phenomenon.

### **Didn’t Soviet policy eliminate clans?**

Despite the common assumption that Soviet policies seeking to break down clan and ethnic affinities succeeded, National Delimitation, collectivization policies and additional efforts to modernize actually strengthened clans and existing informal

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<sup>18</sup> Dale Eickelman and Kathleen Collins both reflect on this in their work.

<sup>19</sup> Shirin Akiner, “Melting Pot, Salad Bowl – Cauldron? Manipulation and Mobilization of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Central Asia,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20. 2, 1997: 383.

<sup>20</sup> Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 20.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Schatz, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 148.

networks throughout Central Asia. Akiner notes that the five nationalities created by Stalin actually “united smaller groupings which had previously been identified (and identified themselves) by geographic location or by clan/tribal lineage.”<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Collins notes that collectivization policies did not eliminate clans but rather “pushed their members together onto the same state-run farms, a situation that put new levers of power into the hands of clan-based networks.”<sup>25</sup> In many ways, Soviet measures allowed for the continuation of traditional ways. Roy supports that clan is “not some unvarying entity deriving from traditional society which has maintained itself throughout the Soviet period and now suddenly re-emerges.”<sup>26</sup> Rather, Central Asian clans remained influential during the reign of the Soviet Union and the “recomposition of traditional society by the Soviet system.”<sup>27</sup> Rubin notes that during the reign of the Soviet Union, even as the Soviet Union acted as a “major aid giver”<sup>28</sup> to Afghanistan, the Afghan state “continued to pursue a strategy of encapsulating traditional local institutions.”<sup>29</sup> Overall, Soviet modernization policies actually reinforced clan ties, strengthening their hold on the community and their promotion through informal networks.

### **Are clans stable or instable?**

During a political transition, clan influence within the political system often leads to a pact between competing clans. Collins notes that the “academic literature on pacts and transitions, based almost exclusively on cases from Southern Europe and Latin

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<sup>24</sup> Akiner, 383.

<sup>25</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 144.

<sup>26</sup> Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 13.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Rubin, *Fragmentation*, 20.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

America, argues that pacts make democratization more likely.”<sup>30</sup> Contrary to this literature, clan pacts in Central Asia have led to both authoritarianism and democratization, while cementing the role of clans in both types of governments.

Collins argues that while clan pacts can add durability to the ruling regime, they do not always promote stability within a state. In fact, clans create the conditions for a possible “cauldron” effect. Akiner explains that:

The privileging of the heritage of one group over and above that of the others inevitably gives rise to resentment and fears of ethnocratic domination. In a time of acute social and economic stress, such as exists today, this readily leads to ethnic polarization and marginalization. This, in turn, activates dormant hostilities which, either through a spontaneous response to a specific incident, or through the conscious mobilization of ethnic sensitivities, could rapidly escalate into confrontation and bloody conflict: the ‘cauldron’ scenario.<sup>31</sup>

Bailey similarly highlights the fragmentation that clan-based antagonisms can lead to, particularly because clan groups are often “engaged in an incessant struggle and endless competition for power and influence.”<sup>32</sup> In her study, Bailey finds that clan structures perpetuate and strengthen “fissiparous and conflictual parallel power networks that, in the event of succession crisis or regional instability, [could] catapult the system toward disintegration and chaos.”<sup>33</sup> Instability can spread quickly throughout a region, and the instability inherent in the clan-based state of Uzbekistan affects the entire region of Central Asia.

### **How do clans influence politics?**

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<sup>30</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 145.

<sup>31</sup> Akiner, 363.

<sup>32</sup> Bailey, 391.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 390.

Klannovayapolitika, or clan politics, is not the same as “ethnic, clientelist, regional, or mafioso politics,” and its influence and permanence are distinct.<sup>34</sup> With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Central Asian leaders “swiftly consolidated their positions as independent leaders by building up local power bases and putting their own ‘clan’ supporters in key offices.”<sup>35</sup> Akiner explains that clans in Central Asia are no longer “predominately locally defined, ‘informal’ identifications,” but have transitioned to influencing “formal nation-state identities.”<sup>36</sup> As clans promote mutual respect and exchange within an exclusive community, they also promote reciprocity through formal networks. Within clan societies, political elites are “normatively and rationally bound to foster the well-being of their clan,”<sup>37</sup> encouraging them to provide social and economic resources and political opportunities to fellow clan members. In return for their generosity, political elites gain the support of their clan network, support that is crucial to maintaining their powerful positions.

### **How do clans affect nation-building?**

National identity is difficult to form in states where powerful regional factions and various group identities exist. Roy provides a definition of nation-state as a collective entity that does not have a central place for clans and their influence:

The nation-state is integrative: it does not accept indirect administration of society and a preservation of the autonomy of solidarity groups. In the nation-state, nationalism is intrinsic: the citizen is defined by a direct relationship to the political community. He is above all a ‘national.’ His identity is not a question of ethnology but a matter of political strategy.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 142.

<sup>35</sup> Akiner, 387.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.

<sup>37</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 142.

<sup>38</sup> Roy, 11.



Akiner indicates that Central Asia's new nationalism includes the "re-instatement of 'traditional' social, cultural, and ethical values as the basis for new state ideologies."<sup>39</sup> This promotes clans and their influence on the state. Ernest Gellner maintains the notion that a "state functionally requires the elimination of lower-aggregate cultural and political attachments"<sup>40</sup> in order to thrive as a nation. Schatz echoes that clans, as informal institutions, pose "critical challenges to nation-building efforts, state-building programs, and battles over the nature of legitimate authority."<sup>41</sup> However, he argues that the "successful construction of national identity does not require a concomitant destruction of local attachments."<sup>42</sup>

Kathleen Bailey disagrees and finds in her studies that clans negatively impede nation-building efforts. She observes how clans "stand in the way of the inculcation of higher loyalties and modern identities"<sup>43</sup> and finds that, in many cases, loyalties to an individual's clan are greater than loyalties to an individual's state. Rubin explores the role of regionalism in the Tajik Civil War, which took place following the collapse of the Soviet Union. He deduces that "Tajik national identity is weak; more important is membership in regional 'clans.'"<sup>44</sup> This creates a problematic situation for nation-building, and national consolidation is often obstructed by the "cleavages" that clans

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<sup>39</sup> Akiner, 363.

<sup>40</sup> Schatz, 5.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>43</sup> Bailey, 380.

<sup>44</sup> Barnett Rubin, "Russian Hegemony and State Breakdown in the Periphery: Causes and Consequences of the Civil War in Tajikistan," In Barnett R. Rubin and Jack Snyder, eds., *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State-Building*, 143.

encourage.<sup>45</sup> With their “local focus of political allegiance,”<sup>46</sup> clans prevent the “development of a common identity and lasting broader political loyalties.”<sup>47</sup> This not only impedes efforts of nation-building, but also efforts to democratize.

### **What is democracy?**

Winston Churchill once said that democracy “is the worst form of government, except for all the others.”<sup>48</sup> While democratic government has its downfalls and shortcomings as a political system, true democracy promotes much better conditions than its alternates. A plethora of scholarship about transitional societies and their transitions towards or away from democracy is available. One of the leading scholars in the area, Samuel Huntington, agrees with Bailey that the nation-state must be founded before a democratic government can be created. He states that “modern democracy is not simply democracy of the village, the tribe, or the city-state; it is the democracy of the nation-state and its emergence is associated with the development of the nation-state.”<sup>49</sup> He classifies a third wave of states that recently transitioned to democracy, and relates these developments to the collapse of the Soviet Union. This study is inappropriate for the Central Asian region, which did not follow the pattern of other Soviet states and has largely “settled down to one shade or another of authoritarianism in which informal, clan-based networks [dominate] political life.”<sup>50</sup> However, Huntington provides a useful

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<sup>45</sup> Bailey, 383.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Samuel Huntington, Democracy for the Long Haul, In Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien, eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies*, 10.

<sup>49</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991) 13.

<sup>50</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 138.

definition of democracy as a system where the “most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote.”<sup>51</sup> In addition, Huntington recognizes that a democratic system can only be introduced when both the conditions favorable to democracy and the motivations of political leaders exist within the state.<sup>52</sup>

Alternatively, Michael McFaul recognizes that there was not a direct causal link between the transition from communism to democracy, and he studies why some states chose democracy and some states became authoritarian. He explores the collapse of European communism and challenges “some of the central hypotheses of the earlier literature concerning the relationship between mode of transition and resulting regime type.”<sup>53</sup> While the Central Asian region remains largely undemocratic, McFaul offers an applicable model by offering a “set of causal paths from ancient regime to new regime that can account for both...democracy and dictatorship.”<sup>54</sup> He discovers that it was not the collapse of communism that encouraged the formation of democracy, but “situations of *unequal* distributions of power that produced the quickest and most stable transitions from communist rule.”<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, countries where “dictators maintained a decisive power advantage”<sup>56</sup> did not experience a successful democratic transition. This model emphasizes President Karimov’s influence in founding an independent state based

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<sup>51</sup> Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 7.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>53</sup> Michael McFaul, “The Fourth Wave of Democracy *And* Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World,” *World Politics*, 54. January, 2002, 213.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

largely on clan alliances. Like Huntington, McFaul emphasizes that the structural forces favoring democracy do not mean anything without the actors to promote the transition.<sup>57</sup>

On the other hand, Collins offers a new way to look at transition in Central Asia. She suggests that the Central Asian states are experiencing a “post-transitional nonconsolidation”<sup>58</sup> and moving towards “weak, clan-based authoritarianism.”<sup>59</sup> She explains:

If clans are the central actors, rationally pursuing the interests of their members, then the weakly institutionalized state will become an arena within which these informal social networks (rather than formal political or social organizations) jostle, contend, and combine in pursuit of their respective interests. Acting informally, competing clans will divide the central state’s offices and resources among themselves. The upshot is a regime that might best be called a *clan hegemony*. While such a regime will hardly be a democracy, neither will it be a classically authoritarian political order.<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, she argues that elite pacts “simply enhance regime viability—and the regime thus reinforced can be as easily autocratic as democratic.”<sup>61</sup>

### **Didn’t the fall of communism bring about democracy?**

The study of transitional societies has led to the development of a recognized trajectory that most states follow during their transition to independence. Traditional transition theory and much of the “writing on democratization assumes, implicitly or explicitly, that a process of democratic institutionalization and consolidation will follow the initial transition.”<sup>62</sup> However, McFaul’s study of the post-communist world “reveals several deviations from the standard models of transition and consolidation, as well as a

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 149.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

wide variation of outcomes regarding regime type.”<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, McFaul hypothesizes that “the farther east one goes, the less fitting the democratic transition and consolidation models become.”<sup>64</sup>

The Central Asian states did not follow the presumed trajectory, despite the fact that they have a literate, well-educated population, and Collins recognizes that “conventional theories about what shapes political transitions are not of much help in this part of the world.”<sup>65</sup> She concludes that transitional theory is incomplete because it largely ignores the roles of clans in the transition. Collins reveals that it is crucial to study “‘informal’ factors such as clans, their pacts, and their conflicts with one another [to give] us a better sense of what is really at the heart of these cases of post-transitional nonconsolidation, and why, after an initial period of divergence, all these republics began to move along more or less the same path toward weak, clan-based authoritarianism.”<sup>66</sup>

Kathleen Bailey also agrees that Uzbekistan’s transition to autonomy cannot be viewed in the same light as other post-communist transitional societies. McFaul concurs that evidence in Central Asia demonstrates that the “collapse of communism by no means leads automatically to a democratic transition.”<sup>67</sup> This lends support to Eickelman’s argument that “periods of crisis or rapid transformation often provide the conjuncture of circumstances suitable for constructing or reformulating new practical, or implicit, ideologies—of lineage, tribe, kinship, sect, religion, loyalty, and nation.” This would

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<sup>63</sup> Michael McFaul, “Russia’s Rough Ride,” In Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien, eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies*, 64.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 150.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> McFaul, “Russia’s Rough Ride,” 64.

explain why the Central Asian states, excluding Kyrgyzstan, founded more clannish, undemocratic political systems after the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>68</sup>

### **What is the affect of clans on democracy?**

Clans have proven to be incompatible with state- and nation-building, and their presence limits a government's ability to function as a nation and to develop into a democratic state.<sup>69</sup> Snyder sees that Central Asian "elites trying to reconcile strategies of state control and ethnic appeasement have increasingly moved to truncate democratic participation."<sup>70</sup> Research indicates that clans are opposed to democratization, and do not only impede the creation of civil society, but reinforce informal networks that operate outside of the state while creating undemocratic exclusions that divide the society. Collins emphasizes that the "corruption and destabilization sown"<sup>71</sup> by clans is antithetical to democratic values. Bailey supports this projection, and describes clans as "conducive to endemic and ruinous corruption."<sup>72</sup> She highlights the "cleavages"<sup>73</sup> that clans promote, which fragment society as they lead to the marginalization of various societal groups and individuals.

Jack Snyder notes that "where administrative institutions are weak, and where the notion of national self-rule is weakly rooted, the preconditions for any statehood, led alone a democratic statehood, are shaky."<sup>74</sup> A democratic nation requires the existence of

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<sup>68</sup> Eickelman, 174.

<sup>69</sup> Bailey, 380.

<sup>70</sup> Snyder, "Introduction" 11.

<sup>71</sup> Collins, "Clan," 142.

<sup>72</sup> Bailey, 390.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 383.

<sup>74</sup> Snyder, "Introduction," 3.

state-wide cooperation and the ability to display “allegiance to the larger community.”<sup>75</sup>

In many clan-based systems, allegiance to clan remains larger than allegiance to the national government. And, while clan identity creates an internal environment of trust and reliance, it leads to a level of competition and distrust among clans. Max Weber feels that “kinship groups inspire irrationality in the legal system and fuel patrimonialism in governance.”<sup>76</sup> According to Bailey, the nation-state is a prerequisite to a democracy, and “only the repudiation and eradication of highly resilient kinship ties which promote ‘a narrow radius of identification and trust’ will allow a modern and progressive nation-state to emerge.”<sup>77</sup> Clans create divisions that make this atmosphere hard to achieve.

### **Are clans withering away or getting stronger?**

Collins criticizes those who ignore the importance of clans within both a social and political context, and those scholars who “mistakenly dismiss the concept as mere journalistic ‘primordialism.’”<sup>78</sup> Not only do recent studies indicate that clans are not “irrational relics of a bygone age,”<sup>79</sup> but clans do not seem to be withering away. Schatz states that clans form “affiliations that are neither slated for social oblivion nor doomed to political insignificance.”<sup>80</sup> Roy reiterates that clan is “very much a key to the political life of the republics of Central Asia.”<sup>81</sup> With many theorists deducing that clans are an enduring feature of society and a lasting influence on politics, this study becomes even more important for the future of the Central Asian region and the international system.

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<sup>75</sup> Bailey, 390.

<sup>76</sup> Schatz, xix.

<sup>77</sup> Bailey, 386.

<sup>78</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 141.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>80</sup> Schatz, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Roy, 13.

### Critics of Clans and Their Shortcomings

There is a limited amount of anthropological studies dedicated to the Central Asian region, with many questions still existing about “which theoretical and methodological approaches proper to social anthropology would be appropriate to Central Asian studies.”<sup>82</sup> The anthropologist Gabriele Rasuly-Paleczek addresses this problem, and notes that “despite rising interest and the removal of many earlier obstacles hindering research, the number of social anthropologists doing research on Central Asia is still small as compared to other regions.”<sup>83</sup> Rasuly-Paleczek addresses what she sees as the shortcomings in the current approach of many political scientists of applying the “notion of segmentary lineage organization as a basic feature” of Middle Eastern society to Central Asia.<sup>84</sup> In general, Rasuly-Paleczek uses the study of Thomas Barfield to criticize the approach of transferring the “models developed in the social anthropology of the Middle East to Central Asia”<sup>85</sup> without further consideration of the unique intricacies the history and development of this region present. In particular, she criticizes the works of Bailey, Collins, and Schatz, and their use of the term clan as the “basis of analyses of post-Soviet political systems in Central Asia.”<sup>86</sup>

While her argument to reconsider the applicability of “Western social anthropology to fill the theoretical and methodological vacuum that emerged after the

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<sup>82</sup> Gabriele Rasuly-Paleczek, “Comparative Perspectives on Central Asia and the Middle East in Social Anthropology and the Social Sciences (Part 1 of 2),” Central Asian Studies Review, 4. 2, 2005: 2.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*



rejection of the formerly prevailing Soviet ones”<sup>87</sup> should be considered, it cannot be denied that clan groups shape the state as much as the state affects clan groups. Even when one considers the shortcomings of Western anthropology, it is possible to extrapolate the important role that clans play in Central Asia. While Middle Eastern tribal and state relations cannot be applied wholesale to the Central Asian states, many of the general themes defining and characterizing Middle Eastern tribal organizations and their influence within the state can be applied to Central Asia and cannot be dismissed as possible and beneficial research avenues. Furthermore, Bailey, Collins, and Schatz, who are personally targeted by Rasuly-Paleczek, have dedicated a lot of time conducting field research in Central Asia. These individuals do not extrapolate their conclusions from research focused on the Middle East; they are making deductions based on their time studying trends within the context of Central Asia. For this reason, their conclusions cannot be discounted on the basis that Rasuly-Paleczek suggests.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I introduced the major theories centered on the phenomenon of clans and their societal role. I also included differing viewpoints and intellectual criticisms to highlight important gaps in the existing research and current debates within the field that need to be resolved through further investigation. Beginning with Chapter Two, I apply these theories to the case of Central Asia, particularly Uzbekistan. In the subsequent four chapters, I offer my own insight and draw my own conclusions, contributing to the existing theories and knowledge of both clan and Uzbekistan’s

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

political system. This study should interest politicians from both democratic and non-democratic states alike, because of its greater applicability to regions beyond Central Asia. Clan politics not only infiltrates one region of the world or one clan-based government, but influences the foundations, dictates the decisions, and forges the alliances of the international system.

## **Chapter 2**

### **A Historical Look at Clan in Uzbekistan**

Today, Central Asia encompasses over 1.5 million square miles with a population of over sixty million. Uzbekistan is not much larger than California, and borders Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. With the largest population in Central Asia, Uzbekistan is home to over 27 million people. All of the Central Asian republics have relatively young populations and according to the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook, 32.9 percent of Uzbekistan's population is under 14, while only 4.7 percent of the population is over 64. A majority of the population, about 80 percent, is ethnically Uzbek, while Russians, Tajiks, Kazakhs, and Karakalpaks, and Tatars also live within its borders. More than half of the region is desert, and one of the largest deserts, the Kyzylkum, covers a large portion of western Uzbekistan. Eastern Uzbekistan is mostly grassland. Uzbekistan is doubly landlocked in all directions, and must rely on artificial irrigation to fuel its lucrative cotton industry.

This chapter seeks to offer a solid historical background of Uzbekistan and the Central Asian region. After establishing the history of Uzbekistan as a part of Transoxiana, under Russian rule, and under Soviet domination, I will then, in subsequent chapters, shed light on clans' political, economic, and societal impact and their potential to exert influence on independent Uzbekistan and the Central Asian region.

### **Part I: Transoxiana**

Transoxiana, as the ancient “Turco-Persian civilization,”<sup>1</sup> was a land where culture was shaped by terrain, water scarcity, and neighboring civilizations. In the west, the Aral Sea provided a large source of fresh water and was once the fourth largest lake in the world. Located in northwest modern-day Uzbekistan and southern modern-day Kazakhstan, this body of water provided a giant fishery and great food source. Two major rivers, the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, flow from the Pamir Mountains and the Ferghana Valley. The Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers, formerly known as the Oxus and Jaxartes Rivers, respectively, join at the basin of the Aral Sea. Semi-arid desert lies to the east and west. The eleventh largest desert in the world, the Kyzylkum, or Red Sand Desert, lies in modern-day Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan between the Amu and Syr Darya. The Karakum, or Black Sand Desert, is located in modern-day Turkmenistan between the Amu Darya River and the Caspian Sea. Both deserts were popular places for the local populations to raise livestock. Civilization flourished near water sources, where overflows helped keep land along the banks fertile and provided fresh drinking water. Overall, sporadic rainfall and the general shortage of water unified citizens of Transoxiana, and two main approaches were developed to cope with water scarcity: nomadic pastoralism and oasis agriculture.

Nomadic pastoralists roamed the steppes of Transoxiana in search of water sources and formed temporary communities at these sites. The movement of nomads was very thorough and methodical, and while nomads could essentially move anywhere, they did not move without a plan. This form of survival was based on “grass, animals and

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<sup>1</sup> Roy, 1.

mobility,”<sup>2</sup> three entities that provide the basic human needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Nomads also herded livestock, particularly sheep and cattle, and were very in touch with the basic resources each animal could provide. However, while the nomadic lifestyle had many positive features, it failed to provide everything that an individual needed and wanted, such as carbohydrates and luxuries.

Alternatively, people settling close to water sources developed a system of oasis agriculture. Samuel Adshead divides Transoxiana into three major oasis centers. In the south, a group of oases surrounded the Zeravshan River, including the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara. To the north, the delta of the Oxus River provided an important water source for Khiva, Khwarazm, and Urgench. Lastly, in the east, the Ferghana Valley oasis flourished, with Kokand as its principle city. Oasis agriculture aimed to maximize and efficiently allocate water resources, and included the development of artificial irrigation systems. Another important component to oasis agriculture, animal husbandry, included the domestication of sheep and cattle, the breeding of horses, and the utilization of camels. In sedentary cities, jobs ranged from merchants to craftsman to domestic servant to government official. While individuals within an oasis developed a strong community, oases were very insular and often isolated from nomadic groups and other oases.

While some interactions between nomadic and sedentary societies were tense, much of their interaction was complementary. The oasis offered an education, while the steppe provided protection. Nomads could not provide grain, tools, or weapons, as well

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Adshead, *Central Asia in World History*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993) 15.

as the luxuries they desired, such as tea and silk. On the other hand, sedentary populations were in need of meat, livestock, and wool and desired fur and leather. This fostered an early trading system, where nomadic and sedentary communities cooperated in order to survive. Raiding developed as a popular alternative to high prices. During this period, it was not uncommon for individuals to migrate from the steppe to the oasis and vice-versa; Adshead deems this relationship compenetrated. While the degree of compenetrated varied due to circumstances and motivation, it helped control overpopulation and compensated for high death rates in the oases.

The steppes of Transoxiana, primarily located in the north, were easy to cross, making it difficult to prevent invasion and to form a unitary state. While the oasis and steppes were easy to cross, deserts and mountainous regions were difficult to cross and led to isolation. Modern-day Uzbekistan is a very mountainous region; Samarkand itself is surrounded by mountains. Peaks of the Pamirs reaching more than 20,000 feet are located primarily in modern-day Tajikistan. This range extends into the Karakoram and the Hindu Kush, the second tallest mountain in the world. In the east, the Tian Shan mountain range extends through modern-day Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and northwest China. With Pobeda Peak reaching 24,406 feet, this mountain range was an important protective boundary and source of isolation. While mountain passages existed, mountains were still a deterrent to invasion and ensured that many areas of Transoxiana remain isolated. In fact, many different dialects and regional cultures were founded as a result of the difficulty of crossing both deserts and mountainous terrain.

Regional identity dominated, and the lack of a centralized political or economic system in Transoxiana led to the development of a “strong chieftaincy or a tribal quasi-state.”<sup>3</sup> Ethnicity was never clearly defined, and people were “distributed more according to ecological and socio-economic criteria.”<sup>4</sup> In fact, prior to the 1920s, Central Asia had never been introduced to the idea of “creating a state by associating a given territory with an ethnic or linguistic group.”<sup>5</sup> Instead, Wheeler points out that people differentiated others in terms not of ethnicity, but of which region they were from.<sup>6</sup> In this environment, local identities such as tribe, clan, locality, and family were prominent determinants of loyalty.<sup>7</sup>

Transoxiana was situated between the ancient civilizations of Persia (modern-day Iran), India, and China. The geographic layout of Transoxiana, with its many steppes and oasis, was easy to invade and difficult to defend. Kathleen Bailey notes that Transoxiana’s “superficial submission to the will of the conqueror, an ‘oasis mentality’ of fatalistic fragmentation took hold.”<sup>8</sup> The restricted ability of crossing mountains and deserts also encouraged the isolation of different communities, preventing the formation of a united front against conquerors.

In addition, Transoxiana’s central location on the Silk Route guaranteed a frequent exchange of diverse cultural and religious ideas, and encouraged interactions between the Middle East, Europe, and South, East, and Central Asia. The Chinese,

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<sup>3</sup> Roy, 2-3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Sengupta, 42.

<sup>7</sup> Roy, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Bailey, “The Politics of Clan: The Case of Uzbekistan,” 47.

Mongols, and Turks passed through Central Asia on their way to Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt, greatly influencing Central Asia religiously, politically, and culturally. Europeans often came to study in Samarkand, a city rich with cultural and scientific learning. The diverse mélange of cultures that traveled through Central Asia left their imprint on Transoxianian society, which absorbed fragments from these interactions and became a “salad bowl” of many cultures.<sup>9</sup>

In the eighth century BC, a group of Iranic speakers, referred to in Greek as the Scythians and as the Saka in Persian, stretched across Transoxiana, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Ukraine and Siberia. The Scythians were equestrian nomadic pastoralists who formed confederated tribes that created “a political form of voluntary association which regulated pastures and organized a common defense against encroaching neighbors.”<sup>10</sup> The Scythians, as a nomadic people, lacked sufficient animal produce and military protection. This encouraged them to develop relationships with sedentary populations.

In the sixth century BC, Darius the Great led a Persian expansion into Transoxiana, or Turan. He attacked the Scythians and other tribal groups from Transoxiana, which the Persians referred to as Turanians. The Persian Empire included twenty provinces, each ruled by a satrap, or governor, and each responsible for paying taxes to the emperor. Transoxiana became a province, or satrapy, of the Achaemenid Empire until the invasion of Alexander the Great.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>10</sup> “Scythians,” in *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation Inc <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/scythians>> (April 11, 2007.)



In the fourth century BC, Alexander the Great invaded and founded the city of Alexandria. While in Transoxiana, he married Roxana, the daughter of local chieftain Oxyartes. Alexander the Great introduced Greek culture to the region and for the next three centuries the Greeks remained a presence in Transoxiana. The city of Alexandria also became a major trading area along the Silk Road, and the Transoxianian region became the “most northeastern point of the Hellenistic culture.”<sup>11</sup>

The Arabs referred to Transoxiana as Mawarannahr, the land above the river, and invaded in the eighth century. Politically, the Arabs were more interested in collecting taxes for the city of Damascus than in enforcing strict rule. Spiritually, Transoxiana was largely pagan prior to this Arab conquest. However, the Arabs, particularly through rapid expansion and the leadership of Qutayba ibn Muslim, brought Islam to the region. While the nomadic peoples of the steppes were Islamized much later, the sedentary populations of Transoxiana adapted quickly to the Islamic faith. Islam, particularly Sunni Islam, spread along the Silk Route, and the ancient cities of Uzbekistan, including Andijan, Bukhara, Ferghana, Kokand and Samarkand, became fantastic centers of Persian and Islamic culture. During his travels, Marco Polo referred to Bukhara as the “finest city in all of Persia.”<sup>12</sup>

In the seventh century, the Chinese migrated as far as Bukhara and Samarkand, but were no competition for the Turks, who were also beginning to migrate into

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<sup>11</sup> “Transoxiana,” in *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation Inc  
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/transoxiana>> (April 11, 2007.)

<sup>12</sup> Martin McCauley, *Afghanistan and Central Asia: A Modern History*. (Harlow: Longman, 2002) 21.

Transoxiana. Beginning in the eight century, Transoxiana underwent a “Turkisation”<sup>13</sup> as Turks entered “en masse,” largely from Siberia.<sup>14</sup> Many Turks continued on to Turkey, while many stayed and were simultaneously Islamized and “Persianized.”<sup>15</sup> This invasion greatly changed the linguistic and cultural landscape of the region. The Turkic tribes were grouped around three major languages, the Oghuz to the south and west of the Aral Sea, the Qipchaks to the north and east, and the Turki in the settled areas of Central Asia. This Turkic language spread and formed the basis for the modern-day Uzbek language.<sup>16</sup>

Turkic rule in Transoxiana constituted an “era of shifting alliances and continuous warfare among petty tribal-based states.”<sup>17</sup> Kathleen Bailey elaborates on the intensification of kinship loyalties and rise of tribal warfare:

Small principalities and proto-states formed and re-formed as various tribal and ethnic groups mingled and divided. Turkic, Mongolian, Iranian and Arabian peoples assimilated each other’s cultures and languages in units that were constantly shifting and fluctuating in a process of cultural absorption. The glue that held these unites together was kinship—the bond of common descent, whether real or imagined, from a shared ancestors. These “state-tribal unions” operated on territory which they tried to aggrandize at the expense of other groups and to which a political hierarchy was welded.<sup>18</sup>

In the thirteenth century, Genghis Khan led a Mongol invasion of Transoxiana and ended the continuous tribal warfare. Many attribute Khan’s success to his discovery of Central Asian horses, and he was notorious for his large and powerful cavalry. At its

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<sup>13</sup> Roy, 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>17</sup> Bailey, “The Politics of Clan: The Case of Uzbekistan,” 50.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

peak, the Mongol Empire stretched from northern China to Central Asia, and encompassed Afghanistan, Iran, Hungary, Poland and Russia. In fact, Joseph Fletcher argues that the “beginning of a continuous world history” began with the Mongolian invasion of Central Asia because of its direct effect on China, Persia, Russia, and Eastern Europe.<sup>19</sup>

Khan’s invasion of Transoxiana led to an “intermixing of populations”<sup>20</sup> and, in many ways, merged the nomadic and sedentary populations closer together. Khan was a vicious ruler, and he countered all forms of resistance with hideous acts of violence. The Mongols pillaged Bukhara, Samarkand, and Tashkent, destroying lives, livelihoods, and the important irrigation systems of the local populations. A popular technique of Khan’s was to behead an entire population, and then create a pyramid of their skulls to compel others to surrender. It is estimated that Khan killed several million people during his reign in Transoxiana.

In 1227, Khan’s son Chagatai was handed this territory and renamed it the Chagatai Khanate. Chagatai associated himself with the Turkic people and Muslim faith, not with Mongol tradition. While Khan had never converted to Islam, many of his Mongol successors became Muslim. During Chagatai’s reign, the Mongols were “simultaneously Islamicised and Turkised.”<sup>21</sup> Many of Khan’s successors built mosques, minarets, tombs, and Islamic educational institutions that are still in existence today.

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<sup>19</sup> Adshead, 5.

<sup>20</sup> Roy, 6.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

This large-scale transformation to Turkic culture and Islamic beliefs led to the spread of the Turkish language, which quickly became the “language of the masses.”<sup>22</sup>

During the fourteenth century, Timur Lenge (also known as Tamerlane), a descendent of Chagatai from the Mongol Barlas tribe, became the ruler of the Chagatai Khanate and founded the Timurid Empire. At its peak, the Timurid Empire encompassed modern-day Afghanistan, Central Asia, India, and Southeast Asia, and expressed the “Turco-Persian cultural synthesis in Transoxiana.”<sup>23</sup> Under this cultural synthesis, Sunni Islam was the religion, Samarkand was the capital, Turkish was the language of literature, and Persian was the language of culture and politics. Tamerlane was also a heavy-handed ruler who terrorized those he conquered and behead those who resisted. Today, Uzbekistan asserts Tamerlane as one of its founders and national heroes.

Despite the fact that Tamerlane lacked the administrative skills of Genghis Khan, the Timurid Empire flourished. Tamerlane founded a community of the most scholarly, philosophical, spiritual, and artistic leaders in Samarkand by collecting the intelligentsia from the lands he conquered. This led to the Golden Age of Central Asia, a period of large-scale artistic and scientific enlightenment. However, the widespread conflict over territory that arouse after Tamerlane’s death led to the empire’s gradual demise.

One of Tamerlane’s sons gained control of the land and moved the capital from Samarkand to western Afghanistan. Tamerlane’s grandson, Ulugh-bek, began to rule Samarkand. Ulugh-bek was a great astronomer, and under his rule, the city became a major center for the study of astronomy and mathematics. Unfortunately, he was

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

assassinated by his own son; an assassination that acted as a catalyst for the disintegration of the empire. After Ulugh-bek's death, wars began among tribal leaders who proved incapable of consolidating of power and centralizing the state.

During this time of turmoil, Abul Khayr gathered twenty-four Uzbek tribes in an attempt to regroup the Khan Uzbek tribal confederation. Soon after their journey began, the group divided; the Qazak tribe broke off and the Uzbeks continued south. Khayr's grandson, Mohamed Shaybani, successfully defeated the Chagatai-Timurid society, conquered Samarkand, and founded the Shaybanid dynasty. As the Uzbeks replaced the Timurid rulers, they retained the Persian language, culture, and state apparatus. By 1510, the lands of the Amu-Syr Darya valley and modern-day northern Afghanistan were under the rule of the Uzbeks.<sup>24</sup>

The Uzbeks founded their dynasty based on "tribal legitimacy"<sup>25</sup> and continued to rule until the arrival of the Russians in the nineteenth century. The capital of this empire was Bukhara, and Khiva and Kokand emerged as important cities. Uzbek rule was indirect, and state authorities relied upon "local notables acting in the name of solidarity groupings."<sup>26</sup> In this way, the state helped strengthen the role of regional leaders, and ensured a power struggle between solidarity groups. This promulgated clan conflict and the three emirates of Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand remained in constant conflict.

As fighting continued between solidarity groups, agriculture, literature and culture began to disintegrate. Around this time, maritime travel was becoming much more

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

popular. This led to the decline of the Silk Route, which further isolated Transoxiana. Also, firearm use was replacing the use of cavalry, putting Transoxiana at a definite disadvantage. Transoxiana, once a center for learning and the heartland of the Silk Road, was now economically disadvantaged, internally weak, and defenseless against outside invasions.

## **Part II: Russian Rule**

Russia's defeat to Great Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire during the Crimean War, fought between 1854 and 1856, crushed Russia's imperialistic hopes to expand westward. Russia began to look to expand elsewhere, and by the eighteenth century, Transoxiana was so weakened by internal conflict that Russia began its imperialistic journey southward. As Martin McCauley points out, Central Asia was an ideal land to conquer:

Central Asia was never wholly controlled by a nomad or a settler. It was too extensive and diverse. The Russians had little trouble in subduing the local rules in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup>

Beginning with Tsar Peter I and continuing through Catherine the Great, Russia led a great expansion into Central Asia, or Turkestan, the land of the Turks. The land closest to the Russian Empire, modern-day Kazakhstan, was easy to cross and difficult to defend. The nomads living in these steppes could only provide "sporadic resistance to the human Russian tide,"<sup>28</sup> and infighting within Turkestan aided Russian attempts at domination. In 1880, six thousand Russians led by Mikhail Skobelev attacked Geok Tepe, a former

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<sup>27</sup> McCauley, 28.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

fortress in present-day Turkmenistan. Even though Russian forces were met by twenty-five thousand resistant Turkmen, the battle took almost fifteen thousand Turkmen casualties. Soon after Russia was declared victorious, officials imposed a Tsarist administration over Turkestan. The Tsar then “became the first ruler to control all of Central Asia.”<sup>29</sup>

The Russian government did not enter Turkestan intending to impose Russian Orthodoxy or transform the cultural makeup of the population. No centralized government was formed to rule over the lands and Turkestan remained ruled by sharia, or Islamic law. In fact, the majority of the population of Turkestan “witnessed little change in their daily lives.”<sup>30</sup> Without direct imperial rule, clans groups and tribal organizations remained the “predominate mode of social” and political organization.<sup>31</sup> Russians were interested in the land to house their own overcrowded population, and flocks of Russian peasants entered modern-day Kazakhstan. As these peasants settled down, they took land from the nomads and forced the privatization of property. This influx of Russian peasants greatly disrupted the nomadic way of life, leading to smaller herds and restricting travel.

Bukhara became a Russian protectorate, similar to the British protectorate of India. Bukhara remained led by emirs who still appeared to hold the decision-making power but developed close relationships with the Russians who came. The emir of Bukhara frequently presented Russian visitors with gifts, and by 1900, the equivalent of

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<sup>29</sup> McCauley, 28.

<sup>30</sup> Roger Kangas, “Uzbekistan: The Karimov Presidency – Amir Timur Revisited,” In Sally N. Cummings, ed., *Power and Change in Central Asia*, 131.

<sup>31</sup> Kathleen Collins, “The Logic of Clan Politics: Evidence from the Central Asian Trajectories,” World Politics, 56, January 2004: 238.

100,000 pounds in 2002 was being spent on gifts for Russian bureaucrats. In exchange for these tokens, Russians refrained from criticizing the emir and his policies. In 1905, the Tsar of Russia was presented with a battleship named *Emir of Bukhara*, a gesture that made a great impression inside and outside of Russia. This gift-giving practice led to competition between Russian bureaucrats who wanted to visit Turkestan and receive these bountiful rewards.<sup>32</sup>

### **The Great Game**

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the almost two thousand miles from British India and the Russian Empire was mostly “unmapped.”<sup>33</sup> Geographically, the lands of Central Asia lay on the path between Russia and India, and Great Britain and India. As Tsarist Russia expanded, Great Britain began to worry that its control over India was threatened. This clash of interests resulted in competition between the two powers for control over Central Asia and Afghanistan, deemed “The Great Game.”

In 1838, Great Britain started the First Anglo-Afghan War, when it attempted to impose a regime in Afghanistan that was forced out by mobs. In 1857, Great Britain was faced with the Indian Rebellion and began to see Afghanistan as a critical buffer state. In 1865 and 1868, Tashkent and then Samarkand and Bukhara, were annexed into the Russian Empire. In 1878, Russia renewed tension with Great Britain when it sent diplomats into Afghanistan, resulting in the Second Anglo-Afghan War. At the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention in St. Petersburg, Great Britain and Russia came to an

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<sup>32</sup> McCauley, 29.

<sup>33</sup> “Uzbekistan,” in *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. (Wikimedia Foundation Inc) <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/uzbekistan>> (April 11, 2007).



agreement over their expansionary policies in the Anglo-Russian Treaty. This treaty placed modern-day Afghanistan under British rule and Turkestan under the rule of the Russian Empire.

Turkestan had a profitable cotton industry that, before Russian expansion, produced around one hundred thousand tons of cotton each year. The emir of Bukhara continued to control cotton's production and sale, as Russia expanded cotton cultivation and Russian merchants became involved in the industry. Cotton was a lucrative crop, yet, its expansion meant the production of less food. This forced the people of Turkestan to import food from Russia and led to large amounts of rural poverty. Many peasants borrowed money for food and could not repay their debts to Russia. These peasants were foreclosed on and stripped of their land. Impoverished individuals often became bandits and "distributed [their booty] among their families and others in need."<sup>34</sup> This reinforced important social networks, particularly familial, tribal, and clan loyalties.

### **The Jadids**

A young intelligentsia, inspired by the Young Turk movement in Turkey, founded the Jadid movement. A jadid press was created, and the Jadids found schools to educate the population and enlighten society. The Jadids spoke out against Russian autocracy; however, they were not anti-Russian and supported the modernity introduced by Russian rule. While the Russian Revolution of 1905 went largely unnoticed by the masses of Turkestan, it opened an arena for social dissatisfaction, advanced reformist thinking, and popular Pan-Turkic programs. These developments aided the Jadid platform, as did

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<sup>34</sup> McCauley, 30.

changing perceptions of the Russians after their 1905 defeat in the Russo-Japanese War. This defeat of a “white race” by a “yellow race” symbolically “ended the aura of Russian invincibility.”<sup>35</sup> In 1916, Turkestan exploded when the Russian Tsar mobilized Muslims in Turkestan who were exempt from military service. This led to armed revolts and pillages, and a “holy war was declared against the infidel.”<sup>36</sup> Russian forces quickly put down the rebellion, however, episodes of dissatisfaction and violence continued until the 1917 Russian Revolution.

### **Part III: Soviet Involvement in Central Asia**

#### **Bolshevik Revolution**

At the time of the Russian Revolution, the local population was primarily Muslim with between eight and ten million Russians living in Turkestan. Both Muslim and Russian populations saw the February 1917 revolution as a liberal solution to the systematic issues of poverty and discrimination within the empire. The Russian population within Turkestan lived in urban areas and worked as proletariats in the factories. The Muslim population was largely turned off from the Bolshevik platform by the notion of atheism. This led to two revolutions in Turkestan: a proletariat revolution based in Tashkent by Russian workers and soldiers, and a Muslim revolution based out of Kokand. The Jadids divided; some chose reform over religion and joined the Bolsheviks, while others chose to support religion over reform and joined the basmachis. Most Jadids were eliminated in the purges of the 1930s.

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

Tashkent was the base of the socialist movement in Turkestan, and many soviets, or councils, were set up to mirror the councils of the Soviet Union. A Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was created, similar to the soviets that existed in St. Petersburg. However, the socialist movement in Turkestan was unpopular because it ignored Muslim interests. In 1920, Vladimir Lenin, the first leader of the Soviet Union and the founder of Leninism, was approached by representatives from the Muslim population. These Muslims proposed that the Autonomous Republic of Turkestan be founded and become part of Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republics. This proposal was granted and the Muslim population did gain some temporary autonomy from Lenin. However, in the meantime, the People's Commissariat of Nationalities, or Narkomnats, led by Josif Stalin, was deliberating the redistribution of Turkestan territory.

### **National Delimitation**

Before the Soviet Union began to exert dominance over the Central Asian region, its population had no set of strict ethnic divisions. Barthold notes that "if you ask a Central Asian who he [was], he would first say that he is a Muslim and then point to his regional identity, if sedentary, or to his clan-based one, if nomadic."<sup>37</sup> McCauley emphasizes that the Bolsheviks were nothing more than "sophisticated imperialists"<sup>38</sup> and in 1924, they divided Turkestan into five distinct nations: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Thus, the Soviet Union artificially created five nations, each republic with a distinct territory, new name, reinvented past, national

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<sup>37</sup> Sengupta, 190.

<sup>38</sup> McCauley, 37.

language and dominant ethnicity, in hopes of thwarting pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic movements while increasing Soviet dominance over the region

Despite Soviet intentions to effectively eliminate clans, nationalistic policies promoting five Central Asian identities did not reduce clans' importance. In fact, the implementation of Soviet policies actually strengthened clan ties. Traditionally, the population had not identified with an ethnicity, and Soviet policies did not change this. The Soviet Union issued an official list of nationalities, and many Central Asians were unable to identify with any.<sup>39</sup> People continued to strongly identify with their families, their clans, and other informal identities. Kathleen Collins reiterates that Soviet policies in Central Asia ultimately led “clans to informal resistance, reliance upon their identity network, and exploitation of state institutions for their advantage.”<sup>40</sup>

Edward Schatz describes the Soviet Union as “one of the most coercive regimes ever witnessed.”<sup>41</sup> However, he distinguishes between the intentions of Soviet policies and the actual implementation of these policies, and concludes that the Soviet Union was “unable to eliminate clan divisions and preclude their role in political life.”<sup>42</sup> Clans were strengthened, largely due to the lack of legitimate Soviet institutions and social trust in Central Asia.<sup>43</sup> The Soviet Union, being simultaneously “weak and omnipresent,”<sup>44</sup> was unable to effectively address the loyalty forged by solidarity groups. Clans were able to persist under Soviet policy largely due to their informality, what Schatz refers to as their

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<sup>39</sup> Roy, 72.

<sup>40</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 239.

<sup>41</sup> Schatz, xvii.

<sup>42</sup> Schatz, xvii.

<sup>43</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 236.

<sup>44</sup> Roy, , 85.

“concealable nature.”<sup>45</sup> Clans operated outside of the state apparatus and could easily skirt around the policies of the powerful Soviet state. While the Sovietization of Central Asia aimed to eliminate clans, it was difficult for the Soviets to identify and locate clan members. Clan background could be “concealed from the agents of Soviet surveillance who prosecuted network behavior.”<sup>46</sup> Consequently, it was very difficult to punish these individuals, who were not visibly or ethnically related. When punishments were enforced, clan bonds were strengthened against the repressive Soviet state.

Kathleen Collins outlines three conditions where clans will continue within strong states. First, clans remain where a “state outlaws and denies clan existence but does not actually dismember them.”<sup>47</sup> During Soviet times, the Soviet state did not act to dismember clans; they simply denounced and denied their existence. Secondly, clans continue “when clan identity is a base of resistance to the regime.”<sup>48</sup> Informally, clans resisted the Soviet regime through undermining the economic, political, and social system of the Soviet Union. Lastly, clans do not disappear where state institutions “inadvertently allow clans access to resources that enable survival.”<sup>49</sup> The collective nature of the Soviet economic system and the affirmative action approach to political appointments ensured clan survival under the Soviets’ seven decade reign.

The Soviets implemented a “social engineering” policy that aimed at destroying traditional society and its remnants.<sup>50</sup> However, Sovietization did “little to disturb the

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<sup>45</sup> Schatz, 14.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>47</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 236.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 236.

<sup>50</sup> Roy, 85.

basic cores” of rural and traditional society, and clans were able to subvert the formal system and continued to dominant economic, political, and social relations.<sup>51</sup> While the Great Purges of the 1930s eliminated many Uzbek elite, those who survived “adapted to their new Soviet situation while simultaneously recognizing the importance of traditional loyalties.”<sup>52</sup> This assured the continuation of clans and the maintenance of traditional society. Roy explains the manifestation of clans within the formal sector of society as a two-level political culture. He explains that there was

On the one hand an appearance of conformity with the social project imposed by the authorities; on the other, a subversion of that project by practices of factionalism and clientelism.<sup>53</sup>

This two-level political culture solidified during Soviet rule when political elites were able to effectively participate in both the formal and informal sectors of government.

### **Collectivization**

In 1928, the Soviet Union launched its first Five-Year Plan to collectivize the countryside, end nomadism, and “bind rural communities to the land.”<sup>54</sup> Soviet collectivization effectively destroyed traditional pastoral agriculture; however, it did not eliminate clan networks. The creation of the kolkhoz, or collective farm, initially impeded the influence of clans. However, policies of collectivization ultimately led to the “systematic territorialisation of solidarity groupings,”<sup>55</sup> strengthening clans and their networks within the kolkhoz.

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>52</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 132.

<sup>53</sup> Roy, 85.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

Under the Soviet Union, Central Asian individuals formed their identity in relation to their membership in a collective.<sup>56</sup> This identification with the kolkhoz was sub-divided into the awlad, or kinship relations, and the mahalla, or neighborhood.<sup>57</sup> Roy calls this shift in Central Asian social structure the “shift into the kolkhozian communitarian system of pre-existing solidarity groups.”<sup>58</sup> Instead of eliminating existing solidarity groups, the kolkhoz provided the structure for clans to persist and helped maintain the dominance of informal networks. Collective farms ensured that clan members worked and lived together, maintaining and strengthening their interconnectedness.

Historically, political identity in Central Asia was “forged by the rural system.”<sup>59</sup> The Soviet Union, seeking to eliminate traditional society, actually “fostered the basic kernel of that society, the solidarity group, as a mediator of relations between the individual and the state.”<sup>60</sup> The kolkhoz was able to establish itself within and eventually manipulate the Soviet system. Economic and administrative leaders of the kolkhoz held power within the local Communist Party, connecting the government and the community. Elected leaders of the kolkhoz were a powerful link between the formal and informal sectors of society, and able to manipulate their societal, economical, and political positions within the Party. In a system where resources and services were scarce, the kolkhoz networks provided the necessary connections to food, housing and other social services. This strengthened the position of the kolkhoz and its leaders within Uzbek

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.

society. Roy notes that the kolkhoz came to function as a “global collectivity,” and individuals grew to rely on these networks for political, economic, and social resolutions.

Soviet administrators took steps to eliminate the evolving solidarity networks in Central Asia, such as combining kolkhozes and regrouping living arrangements.<sup>61</sup> Soviet policies addressing the strength of the kolkhoz and seeking to eliminate these solidarity groups only proved that these communities “had a reality which survived bureaucratic manipulation.”<sup>62</sup> In 1954, the Soviets launched a campaign to weaken clan ties and solidarity groups. In 1964, Sharaf Rashidov, the first secretary of Uzbekistan, sought to eliminate the mahallas, announcing the elimination of the khutar system, a system that ensured each group had its “own separate habitat.”<sup>63</sup> However, the countryside was under-administered and this policy failed. The separation of rural communities from the state also made it possible for the kolkhoz to maintain a “relatively autonomous” status.<sup>64</sup>

In Central Asia, the kolkhoz and its administrative structure ensured that regionalism would remain a large part of local and national politics. Within the kolkhoz, political power correlated with the networks in that district.<sup>65</sup> Roy explains that these solidarity networks were both horizontal and vertical. The networks moved vertically “from the *kolkhoz* to the higher reaches of the state” and horizontally between apparatchiks<sup>66</sup> when individual and group interest conflicted.<sup>67</sup> However, Roy reiterates that regional interests were central to political decision-making and that clan influence

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 87-8.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>66</sup> Apparatchiks were leaders within the Soviet Party structure.

<sup>67</sup> Roy, 92.



and personal loyalties dominated political appointments. President Karimov argues that during this period

A personal recommendation by the acquaintance of an official or closely related person to him – a relative, a friend, a countryman – was the magic word that opened the doors of his office. In his turn, such an administrator needed a reliable and loyal environment to maintain and reinforce his position in power. The principal of personal loyalty became one of the criteria of his staff selection policy.<sup>68</sup>

As a rule, the kolkhoz presidents were from the district they represented and dealt directly with the community they led. Turnover was low, and local leadership positions became long-term careers. Many times, administrative positions were passed on to family members or other local loyal patrons. Even if a prominent kolkhoz leader moved to the capital, his career continued to depend on regional support. In exchange for this support, the leader was expected to represent the regional interests of his community.<sup>69</sup>

Across much of Central Asia, important clan networks were created around popular leaders and prominent families. Initially, these began regional networks; however, Roy asserts that clan alliances could deviate from the region, particularly in the case of marriage.<sup>70</sup> For example, Rashidov's son married the first secretary of Karakalpakia, Kalibek Hamolov's, daughter. This marriage helped cement a regional alliance and alleviated the "Karakalpak question."<sup>71</sup> This alliance was maintained and

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<sup>68</sup> Islam Karimov, *Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century: Challenges to Stability and Progress*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998) 61-2.

<sup>69</sup> Roy, 92.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kamalov, was the son-in-law of Rashidov.<sup>72</sup>

However, the majority of clan alliances were forged on a regional basis.

### **Urbanization**

The strong clan networks that dominated the countryside also flourished in urban areas. As urbanization became more common, solidarity groups were able to unite and form powerful urban communities. Clan members moved to cities together, forming neighborhoods known as mahallas. Within these mahallas, clan connections reinforced informal social, economic, and political networks. As more individuals from the countryside moved into the cities, they would seek out and join their regional neighbors. This allowed clan networks to not only dominate the different rural regions of Uzbekistan, but also the capital and other major cities.

### **Two-States of Integration**

Viktoria Koreteyeva and Ekaterina Makarova divide Uzbek integration into the Soviet system into two distinct stages.<sup>73</sup> The first stage occurred between the 1930s and 1960s, when the Soviet system had “no roots among the native population and strove to remodel and control local society by modernizing it.”<sup>74</sup> While the Soviet Union followed a modernization policy in Central Asia, Sociologist Deniz Kandiyoti illustrates that this policy had a contradictory nature, and that Soviet modernization actually “combined modernizing aims with traditional means.”<sup>75</sup> In her analysis, the Soviets used means that encouraged tradition, and tradition was “as much a creation of the Soviet system as a

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Viktoria Koreteyeva and Ekaterina Makarova, “Money and Social Connections in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Uzbek City,” *Central Asian Survey*, 17.4, 1998: 581.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 579.

response to it.”<sup>76</sup> In an effort to eliminate traditional thinking and alignments within society, the Soviets launched policies to eliminate solidarity groups, and in response, clans were “pushed underground and made private.”<sup>77</sup> Schatz explains that in most of Central Asia, individuals kept “their background private – at least from state agents.”<sup>78</sup> This allowed clans to remain salient features of society.

The second stage occurred as Soviet rule became internalized in Uzbek society, and indigenous people began to represent the Soviet system.<sup>79</sup> The distance from Moscow allowed clan leaders to gain political positions on collective farms and within the formal state apparatus. The Soviet Union established an “affirmative action” appointment system to fill positions within the central political apparatus with indigenous individuals. By the 1940s, the Soviet Union was struggling, and lacked the resources and time to focus on a lesser interest like Central Asia and the existence of clans there. Unlike Stalin’s policy to eliminate clans, Leonid Brezhnev’s policy ensured that he turned a “blind eye to practices such as informal patronage of one’s network” as long as the Central Asian republics were politically submissive and economically productive.<sup>80</sup> Kangas points out that as long as raw materials from Uzbekistan, such as cotton, were contributing to the Soviet system, internal affairs were largely ignored.

### **Economic Scarcity**

The centrally planned economy of the Soviet Union resulted in frequent shortages, and informal clan networks provided these goods, strengthening a large

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Schatz, 17.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Koreteyeva, 581.

<sup>80</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 239.

underground economy and reinforcing the importance of clan ties. Resources were scarce and accessibility to goods was limited, but clan leaders were able to surpass these obstacles by manipulating the system to provide for their members. It is important to realize that it was “not only access to goods and services, but, more importantly, contact with those who had this access, [that] became the most valuable resource in the Soviet system.”<sup>81</sup> One elder, whose clan entered the party system in the 1940s, affirms that “we lived very well under the Soviet system, even though few believed it.”<sup>82</sup>

With clan connections in power positions, many individuals were able to survive the harshness of the struggling Soviet economic system. Many individuals used their positions to steal food and resources from collective farms, while others were very successful in manipulating the lucrative cotton industry. Not only were material goods easier to obtain through informal networks, but “connections were crucial in obtaining prestigious jobs, getting places in institutions of higher education or in receiving superior medical treatment.”<sup>83</sup> It was very important for a member of a clan in a position of leadership to look out for his relatives and fellow clan members. Koreteyeva and Makarova introduce the concept of social wealth, which was of “vital importance in negotiating one’s status in the public sphere.”<sup>84</sup> The case of one Tajik man, who was born in Samarkand in 1950, exemplifies this social wealth and the importance of familial, clan, and regional networks under the Soviet system.

After graduation from a Tajik school [he] went to study physics in Dushanbe. His cousin, who worked at Dushanbe University, helped him through the entrance

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<sup>81</sup> Koreteyeva, 581.

<sup>82</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 239.

<sup>83</sup> Koreteyeva, 585.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 586.

exam. After a year an uncle of our informant helped him to move back to Samarkand University, where one of the highest administrators was his friend. A few years later another uncle in Dushanbe called an academician from the Tajik Academy of Sciences and arranged for his nephew to get a job at a research institute. In the course of his career our informant left physics altogether and became a full-time secretary of the Komsomol committee in a technical school—thanks to the help of his brother from the regional party committee. Here he was disappointed at not being able to join the party, interpreting this to mean that he was alien at the school, where ‘they had their own students and their own relatives’. To a lesser degree, other networks, such as the mahalla, operated also, and it was not unusual for neighbors to ask a university professor living in the same mahalla for ‘advice’ as to where to send their children to study, meaning that this person could be a relevant connection.<sup>85</sup>

This example not only illustrates the familial, clan, and regional connections that were so important, but it also illustrates the degree of unfairness and exclusion that these connections created.

### **Communism and Clans**

Under a system where clans were able to “rehabilitate and promote themselves with little fear of repercussion from the party-state,”<sup>86</sup> clans endured within the state structure. Roy suggests that the distance from Moscow made the “physical presence of the administration in the countryside...slight.”<sup>87</sup> Kathleen Collins tells of one local clan elder who, when discussing his village, said “everyone here is related; we are family. We cooperated in deceiving the party officials whenever they came. It was quite easy, since they did not come often.”<sup>88</sup> Through participation in the Communist Party, local leaders were able to exert dominance in the political and economic realm, and through this manipulation, clan structure was able to thrive. Furthermore, membership in the Communist Party was penetrated by clan interests. In rural areas, the party was “entirely

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 239.

<sup>87</sup> Roy, xiii.

<sup>88</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 239.

captured by traditional solidarity groups.”<sup>89</sup> In fact, Olivia Roy reiterates that for regional and clan-based loyalties to function a “national space is actually needed.”<sup>90</sup> Clan ties bound individuals to the system, and the Communist Party became an important social link between the state and the clan. Schatz reiterates that under the domination of Soviet Union “subethnic networks came to occupy illicit and private social niches because the state edged them from public life while promoting their utility as an underground phenomenon.”<sup>91</sup> This retained the institution of clan as an enduring and salient feature of society.

Uzbekistan is distinct among the Central Asian states in that it has “always been ruled by native-born cadres.”<sup>92</sup> After the 1940s, more and more indigenous cadres came to power in Central Asia. This encouraged the party to end its identity as an “externally imposed structure and [to become] the place in which local elites were formed and expressed.”<sup>93</sup> Under the Soviet system, three positions welded the most power: the First Secretary of the Communist Party, the President of the Supreme Soviet, or Head of the State, and the Prime Minister. The role of Second Secretary was usually given to a Russian, and if a Russian was the First Secretary, the Second Secretary would be a Muslim. At this time, the Bukhara, Ferghana and Tashkent clans emerged as powerful political entities. Roy concludes that the “allocation of these three positions in terms of clan interests [was] indicative of how the power balance worked.”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Roy, xiii.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Schatz, 17.

<sup>92</sup> Roy, 109.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

Between 1925 and 1937, there was a relatively balanced regional representation within the state from Bukhara, Ferghana and Tashkent. The Prime Minister, Fayzullah Khojayev, was from Bukhara, the First Secretary of the Communist Party, Akmal Ikramov, was from Tashkent and the President of the Supreme Soviet, Yoldash Akhundbabayev, was from Ferghana. This leadership conglomeration ensured that these three regions were being more or less equally represented within the power structure of the Soviet system. However, in 1937, this balance was ended when Khojayev and Ikramov disappeared, having been accused of nationalism and pan-Turkism. After their disappearance, Akhundbabayev, who was not well-educated, not a Jadid, and from Ferghana, was able to secure his personal success, and the success of the Ferghana clan within the central government.<sup>95</sup>

### **Ferghana-Tashkent Alliance**

After 1937, Ferghana was a “rising region”<sup>96</sup> and much of the central leadership was from this region. In addition to Akhundbabayev, who held the position of President of the Supreme Soviet until 1943, the First Secretary of the Party from 1937 to 1950, Osman Yussupov, was also from Ferghana. Ferghana-born Amin Nyazov was the President of the Supreme Soviet before becoming the First Secretary of the Communist Party until 1955. The two consecutive Presidents of the Council of Ministers after 1937, Segizbayev and Abdurrahmanov, were also from Ferghana. These individuals illustrate

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

the Ferghana clan's dominance in the central government from the late 1930s until the late 1950s.<sup>97</sup>

During this period, the Ferghana clan allied with individuals from the Tashkent region, an alliance that Roy states "still makes sense today."<sup>98</sup> Roy explains that these two regions encompass the "most 'Uzbek' and least Persian part of the country."<sup>99</sup>

Tashkent-born Siraj Nuritdinov was named First Secretary of the Tashkent province in 1947 and, in 1949, he joined the Politburo of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan.

Muhitdinov, also Tashkent-born, started his career in Ferghana, became First Secretary of the Tashkent province in 1950, President of the Council of Ministers in 1951, Deputy Prime Minister, and then, in 1955, he was named First Secretary when Khrushchev traveled to Tashkent. In 1957, he was appointed Secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan in Moscow, a position that had never before been held by a Central Asian. Sabir Kamalov, also originally from Tashkent, became the Second Secretary of the Ferghana district in 1938, the President of the Council of Ministers from 1955 to 1957, and then replaced Muhitdinov as First Secretary until 1959. Roy points out the similarities between Muhitdinov's and Kamalov's careers, which went "from Tashkent to Tashkent, passing via Ferghana."<sup>100</sup>

### **Sharaf Rashidov**

Until 1959, the Tashkent-Ferghana alliance remained in control. However, in 1959, the government experienced an "arrival of apparatchiks who were pure products of

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.



the Soviet system.”<sup>101</sup> Sharaf Rashidov, an individual who was born in Jizak and began his career in Samarkand, quickly moved up in the ranks, ensuring the dominance of a new regional alliance, the Samarkand-Jizak entity. After serving as the editor of *Lenin Yolu* in Samarkand and then *Qizil Uzbekistan* in Tashkent, he became the President of the Union of Writers in 1950. In 1951, he became President of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet.

At this time, Muhitdinov was actively appointing individuals from Samarkand to leadership positions, “hoping to hold off rivals within his own regionalist faction.”<sup>102</sup> These rivals include Nuritdinov, his wife Iadgar Nasriddinova, Sabir Kamalov, and Mirza-Ahmedov. Rashidov’s success can be largely attributed to Muhitdinov’s political decision-making and personal protection. Also, Moscow wanted to “avoid any single faction gaining hegemony,”<sup>103</sup> and Khrushchev seemed to favor Rashidov. In 1959, Rashidov became First Secretary of the Communist Party and Nasriddinova replaced him as Head of State. As First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party, Rashidov actively appeased the Soviet Union while serving his own clan interests. In the 1960s, he successfully removed many of his political rivals from their positions and appointed individuals from his Samarkand-Jizak region in their places.<sup>104</sup>

At this point, the Tashkent-Ferghana faction was still largely in control of the Uzbek state, with Kamalov and Nishanov powerful figures, Rahmankul Kurbanov, Bukhara-born but with a career in Ferghana, as the president of the Council of Ministers,

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 132.

and Iadgar Nasriddinova as the Head of State. In 1961, Muhitdinov was removed from the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and appointed ambassador to Damascus. Rashidov subsequently joined the Politburo as a deputy member. According to Roy, this “reflected Khrushchev’s desire, at the time of his charm offensive in relation to the Third World, to open high-ranking offices in the USSR to Muslim apparatchiks.”<sup>105</sup> However, Rashidov’s new status in Moscow did not translate to any increased power for him or his Samarkand-Jizak faction in Uzbekistan. After Muhitdinov was removed from the Politburo, the Tashkent-Ferghana faction “once again became homogenous and closed ranks against Rashidov the intruder.”<sup>106</sup>

However, this faction was only able to extend its power so far. In 1969, during a football match between an Uzbek and a Russian team, there was a large demonstration launched against the Russians. This demonstration shook the foundation of Russian-Uzbek relations, which was largely based on “broad autonomy of action in exchange for loyalty and anti-nationalism.”<sup>107</sup> After this event, Rashidov was able to persuade Moscow into believing that Nasriddinova and her associates were at fault. Nasriddinova lost her position, Kurbanov received a six-year prison sentence, and in 1970, Nishanov was removed from the Politburo.

Following these events, Khodaberdayev, from Jizak, was appointed president of the Council of Ministers and Nazar Machanov, from Samarkand, became the Head of State. Both Khodaberdayev and Machanov were allies of Rashidov, and their

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<sup>105</sup> Roy, 111.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

appointments signaled a shift from the Tashkent-Ferghana faction to the Samarkand-Jizak faction, which began to dominate politics in 1971.<sup>108</sup> Moscow wanted to avoid any type of political hegemony and “discreetly began pushing other pawns into place.”<sup>109</sup> This included replacing Machanov with Inamjan Osmankhojayev, who was both born and politically active in the Ferghana Valley.

On November 10, 1982, First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, passed away and was succeeded by Yuri Andropov. Soviet “stagnation” under Brezhnev made “the rules of social and political life...more predictable.”<sup>110</sup> In his twenty-five year reign, Brezhnev had followed policies that both ignored and fostered clan loyalties. Instead of fostering clan loyalties, Andropov employed the KGB to “monitor the Central Asian republics and document extensive corruption, deception of the party-state institutions, and departure from Leninist principles.”<sup>111</sup> This drastic policy change challenged clan factions, but did not eliminate them.

In 1983, the cotton affair unfolded as Soviet leadership realized that “regional offices were staffed by people loyal to regional leaders” in order to meet production quotas established by the Soviet Union.<sup>112</sup> This scandal uncovered intricate clan-based networks within the political and economic sectors of Uzbekistan and initiated a “Moscow-directed clean-up.”<sup>113</sup> Rashidov was “openly dismissed” in what Collins refers

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Schatz, 18.

<sup>111</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 240.

<sup>112</sup> Sengupta, 285.

<sup>113</sup> Roy, 112.

to as a “dramatic reversal of Brezhnevite stability.”<sup>114</sup> In 1983, Andropov launched a widespread purge that was continued by Gorbachev from 1985-1988. During this period, thousands of politically and economically powerful individuals were removed from their positions.

The leadership installed by Moscow during the purges had stronger ties to the Party than to clans. These individuals helped implement the purges, and over 30,000 individuals in both the Uzbek and Kyrgyz Republics were removed from their national or local post. Mostly replaced by ethnic Russians, this shift signaled a dramatic reverse in the Soviet policy of “letting Central Asians rule Central Asia as long as they did not openly challenge the party.”<sup>115</sup> Now, Uzbek leadership and its clans groups were openly targeted.

Another upset for the clan-based loyalty system was the sudden death of Rashidov in November 1983. This permitted the Soviet Union to advance the Central Asian leadership away from Rashidov’s clan. Osmankhojayev, who was considered a “more Russified Central [Asian] close to Moscow and the Party,”<sup>116</sup> was appointed First Secretary largely because “he was seen as a person not well connected to Rashidov.”<sup>117</sup> Osmankhojayev formed an alliance with the new Head of State, Salimov, and Khaydarov, the President of the Council of Ministers. These three individuals allied to represent the Ferghana-Tashkent faction.

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<sup>114</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 240.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 133.

In the purge of January 1985, forty of sixty-four provincial secretaries, including ten of thirteen first secretaries, were “relieved of their posts.”<sup>118</sup> In January of the following year, the Rashidov clan was attacked by the Congress of the Communist Party. Salimov was removed and replaced by Nishanov, a representative of the Tashkent-Ferghana faction who was seen by Moscow as very loyal to the Party. In 1988, Osmankhojayev was removed, officially because of his “‘ineffectiveness’ in cleaning up political corruption in Uzbekistan.”<sup>119</sup> However, he was removed because he had been promoting his own Ferghana clan.<sup>120</sup> Haibulayev, who was Samarkand-born, was appointed the new Head of State and Nishanov, an individual “even more fiercely anti-Rashidov,”<sup>121</sup> replaced Osmankhojayev as First Secretary. Nishanov, though a representative of the Tashkent-Ferghana faction, was widely viewed as a “slave of Moscow.”<sup>122</sup> However, this did not prevent him from advancing the interests of his own clan. As first secretary, he

waged war on Rashidov’s ghost: he abolished the district of Jizak, which had been created by Rashidov; he engineered the replacement of Haibulayev, who refused to speak against Rashidov, by Ibrahimov, a Ferghanite.<sup>123</sup>

These political maneuvers ensured that the Tashkent-Ferghana once again began to dominate the central government. Furthermore, it strengthened marginalized clans resolve to “reassert control.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Roy, 112.

<sup>119</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 133.

<sup>120</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 241.

<sup>121</sup> Roy, 112.

<sup>122</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 241.

<sup>123</sup> Roy, 112.

<sup>124</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 241.

Unlike other Soviet Republics, like Ukraine and the Balkans, Uzbekistan “did not experience the same pattern of political awakening” during the 1980s.<sup>125</sup> Overall, the Uzbek population did not participate in policies such as perestroika or glasnost. This can be in part explained by the “inherent apolitical nature of the population.”<sup>126</sup> Additionally, Central Asian clan groups were extremely resistant to Gorbachev’s policies, locally referred to as *krasnyi desant*, or ‘the red landing.’<sup>127</sup>

As the Soviet Union began to deteriorate, clans reasserted their position within society. Ethnic riots and mass demonstrations that broke out in 1989 to 1990 disgraced Nishanov and offered clans the opportunity to promote their own position within the government. In each Central Asian state, excluding Tajikistan, the Soviet-led purges had eliminated clan hegemony and left a relatively stable balance among different clan groups. In Uzbekistan, clan elites “brokered informal pacts to reclaim power.”<sup>128</sup> These pacts were made before the transition from the Soviet Union and decided the “power each clan elite could tap in order to shape the transition and press its own favored political and economic agenda.”<sup>129</sup> It is during this time of turmoil and informal networking that Islam Karimov came to power.

### **Islam Karimov**

Young Islam Karimov moved himself up in the ranks of the Uzbek-Soviet system. In 1986, he was appointed the Chairman of Uzbekistan’s branch of Gosplan and Deputy Head of State. He was supported by Osmankhojayev, but not Nishanov, who had him

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<sup>125</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 132

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Collins, “The Logic,” 240-1.

<sup>128</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 144.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

removed from office and sent to be Oblast Secretary of Kashkadaria. In 1989, Karimov was elected First Secretary by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan. In June of that same year, Shukrullah Mirsaidov, a member of the Tashkent faction, became Prime Minister. Karimov and Mirsaidov formed an alliance, or an informal pact, and in 1990, Karimov became the head of state and Mirsaidov became Vice President. Amidst all of these political reshuffles, Karimov proved himself “savvy enough to consolidate power quickly and take advantage of the ever-changing conditions around him.”<sup>130</sup>

Due to the fact that he lacked especially strong clan ties and was not “entrenched in any one network,”<sup>131</sup> Karimov becomes the broker of the clan pact in Uzbekistan, responsible to address clan interests and stabilize the Uzbek republic.<sup>132</sup> Mark Beissinger points out that as the Soviet Union disintegrated, no group or organization emerged that was “capable of fulfilling a transitional function to a non-Party based regime.”<sup>133</sup> This allowed Islam Karimov to “reposition himself as a nationalist figurehead”<sup>134</sup> as he put Uzbekistan on the “fast track to independence.”<sup>135</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Central Asia has undergone quite an interesting history, a history that has shaped the region culturally, politically, and economically. The next chapter explores Central Asia after the break-up of the Soviet Union and Uzbekistan during its past sixteen years

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<sup>130</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 134.

<sup>131</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 242.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>133</sup> Michael Denison, “Identity Politics in Central Asia,” *Asian Affairs*, 34. 1, 2003: 59.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Roy, 132.

of independence, in order to further the historical foundation of a state where clans still dominate personal and political ties.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Klannovayapolitika and Democracy in Autonomous Uzbekistan**

Due to excessive economic, military, social, and political strain, the Soviet Union was unable to maintain its dominance. In August 1991, a coup was staged against the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Mikhail Gorbachev, and the Soviet government. In December 1991, the Soviet Union was official dissolved, and each of its fifteen republics were deemed independent states. On September 1, 1991, Uzbekistan entered the international arena as an independent state founded on a clan pact. Uzbekistan approached this somewhat “forced transition”<sup>1</sup> by breaking away from its Soviet legacy and beginning its fierce drive towards nationalism.

This chapter seeks to determine the situation that clan politics present for an authoritarian, recently independent state within the larger international system. I also outline the official government structure in order to establish a solid foundation for reading Chapter Four, which discusses the persistence of clans in the formal political system of Uzbekistan.

### **Clan Pact**

As the Central Asian republics transitioned from the Soviet Union to independence, powerful clan elites informally formed pacts that supported leaders who could “manage these informal pacts, continue to balance clan interest, and stabilize the republics.”<sup>2</sup> In 1989, clan leaders in Uzbekistan began to support Islam Karimov as the

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<sup>1</sup> Collins, “The Logic”, 243.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

political actor who could act as a “balancer and legitimate broker” of clan interests.<sup>3</sup> An internal clan pact became the informal basis of a durable Uzbek regime and set the conditions for addressing shared concerns of economic and political distribution. This pact informally placed clans “behind the levers of power of the formal regime,”<sup>4</sup> preserving clan’s salient role in the economic and political networks of the state.

Regional factions lead to many problems for state legitimacy and nation-building, and continue to add “significant constraints” on elites and ideology.<sup>5</sup> As President of Uzbekistan, Karimov has “struggled to maintain state power apart from clan domains and has waged an ongoing battle with clans that seek to disperse executive power and resources to their control.”<sup>6</sup> Clan interests and clan-based corruption often conflict with Karimov’s agenda, and he has been unable to consolidate his power separate of these strong informal interests.<sup>7</sup> However, he continues to manipulate his influence in order to overcome the many obstacles caused by clan divisions. In fact, it has been through political maneuvering motivated by these same regional loyalties that Karimov has been able to maintain his power.

Karimov has created a rough clan balance; however, maintaining this precarious balance has become a struggle. Karimov continues to depend on support from clan factions, and clan elites remain dependent on Karimov’s patronage. However, with increasing strains on the state’s resources and political space, clan interests are becoming more and more difficult to appease. Clan loyalties prevent the centralization of the state

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 243-4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

and fair distribution of economic resources, and the delicate balance that exists threatens to explode.

## **Official Structure of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

### **The Constitution**

Uzbekistan is a constitutional government, and the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan was created by President Karimov and then approved by the Oliy Majlis on December 8, 1992. When the first drafts of the constitution were formed, foreign consultants were able to comment on it; however, these suggestions were never incorporated into the final draft.<sup>8</sup> The Constitution outlines the responsibilities and powers of the government and centers governmental power on the Office of the President.

Chapter 23 of the Constitution outlines the rules and procedures of the electoral system. The Constitution states that the President and other representative government bodies “shall be elected on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot.”<sup>9</sup> All Uzbek citizens over eighteen are granted one vote and eligible for public office.

### **Office of the President**

The President of Uzbekistan is directly elected by the Uzbek people to serve a five-year term. A constitutional amendment approved in 1995 extended the presidential term to seven years. Any citizen over the age of thirty-five, who has lived in Uzbekistan

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<sup>8</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 136.

<sup>9</sup> “Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan”  
<<http://www.uzbekconsulny.org/uzbekistan/constitution.pdf>> (April 19, 2007.)

at least ten consecutive years before the election and can speak Uzbek, is eligible for the presidency. Once in office, the President may run for reelection, but is ineligible to hold office more than two consecutive terms.

As the head of the state, the President holds the executive power of Uzbekistan. He acts as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Uzbek armed forces and as the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, he appoints each minister with the approval of the Oliy Majlis. The President holds extensive powers, including the authority to “initiate and approve of legislation, establish government policies, appoint and dismiss top national and regional officials, and set the electoral schedule.”<sup>10</sup> In addition to these responsibilities, the President represents Uzbekistan in foreign relations, signs international agreements, ensures that the constitution is followed, and is the “guarantor of democracy.”<sup>11</sup> Upon retirement, the President becomes a lifelong member of the Constitutional Court.

### **Oliy Majlis**

The Oliy Majlis, which means “supreme assembly,”<sup>12</sup> acts as the highest legislative body in Uzbekistan. Originally a unicameral body, a bicameral system was adopted in 2004, dividing the Oliy Majlis into two chambers: the Legislative Chamber, or lower house, and the Senate, or upper house. Representatives are directly elected by the people and serve a five-year term. Citizens of Uzbekistan who are 25 years old and older are eligible to serve in the assembly. Karimov is permitted to appoint sixteen members to

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<sup>10</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan: 134.

<sup>11</sup> “About Uzbekistan” Embassy of Uzbekistan to the United States 2004  
<<http://www.uzbekistan.org/uzbekistan/political>>. April 12, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Roy, 162.

the Senate. During Soviet times, the Oliy Majlis had five hundred members. In both the 1994 and 1999 elections, only two-hundred and fifty representatives, one from each electoral region, were elected. This body initiates legislation and authorizes executive policies, holding at least two sessions per year. While directly elected by the population, members of the Oliy Majlis are largely influenced by the President.

### **Cabinet of Ministers**

The President appoints and removes the Cabinet of Ministers, while the Oliy Majlis oversees and approves these decisions. The Cabinet of Ministers is the most powerful executive organization of the government and includes the Prime Minister, First Deputy Prime Minister, Deputies of the Prime Minister, ministers, chairmen of state committees, heads of large state concerns and corporations, and the Chairman of Karakalpakstan. In terms of its responsibilities, the Cabinet of Ministers

shall provide guidance for the economic, social and cultural development of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It should also be responsible for the execution of the laws and other decisions of the Oliy Majlis, as well as of the decrees and other enactments issued by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.<sup>13</sup>

The orders and regulations issued by the Cabinet of Ministers are deemed binding for all levels of the Uzbek state.

### **Judiciary**

The judicial branch of the government encompasses the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Economic court. The Constitutional Court defends matters of the Constitution, the Supreme Court address administrative, civil and criminal justice, and the Supreme Economic Court has jurisdiction over the economic sphere.

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<sup>13</sup> “Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan.”

Judges elected to each of these three supreme courts serve a five-year term. The judicial system also includes both the Supreme and Economic Court of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the Tashkent Municipal Court and all regional, district, town, economic and military courts. Judges appointed to the lower courts also serve five-year terms.

### **Political Parties**

Article 34 of the Constitution gives citizens the right to form trade unions, public associations, and political parties. The Law on Political Parties states that “parties can legally register as long as they are not religious-based and/or bent on violent means of expression.”<sup>14</sup> However, opposition within Uzbekistan’s largely presidential government is not encouraged. A political party must be registered at the Ministry of Justice at least six months before the election in order to register a candidate for the parliamentary election. In addition, the party must gather fifty thousand signatures, and only 10 percent of these signatures can come from any one region, including Tashkent and Karakalpakstan. Once officially registered, parties can nominate up to 250 candidates for Parliament, one candidate from each electoral region. However, local governments can sponsor candidates for election without collecting any signatures, making it easier for candidates of regional clan groups than representatives of political parties to run for election.

Today, there are five functioning political parties which tend to be “Tashkent-based and fairly weak.”<sup>15</sup> These parties include the People’s Democratic Party, Adolat, Milliy Tiklanish, Fidokorlar, and UzLiDeP. While there are representatives from all five

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<sup>14</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 136.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

official political parties serving in the Oliy Majlis, these parties remain largely ineffective. Karimov has formally said that a president should remain above party politics, separating political parties from the current regime.

The Communist Party of Uzbekistan was renamed the People's Democratic Party, or Halq Demokratik Partiiasi, in 1991. The official motto of the NDPU, roughly translated, is "prosperity of the people – pledge of prosperity of a native land."<sup>16</sup> Today, this party includes over 580,000 members. Prior to 2004, it had 48 deputies active in parliament. These 48 individuals made up just over 19% of the parliament. Karimov retired as head of the party in 1996, and Ashurbaevich Rustamov currently serves as the leader of the party. Rustamov was born in the region of Samarkand in 1962 and studied at both Samarkand State University and the Tashkent State Economic University. In 2001, he became the Secretary of the Council of Bank Turon and has actively led the NDPU since 2003.<sup>17</sup>

In 1995, the Adolat Demockratik Partiiasi was created. Adolat means Justice, and more than 50,100 individuals are members of this Social-Democratic Party of Uzbekistan. Turgunpulat Obidovich, who was born in Tashkent in 1941, is the current leader of Adolat. He is highly educated, a doctor of medical sciences, and the former director of the First Tashkent State Medical Institute. He has been leader of Adolat since 1996. Prior to 1994, Adolat had 8 deputies in parliament, representative of about three percent of Parliament.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> "Political Parties" Political System of Uzbekistan <<http://politics.freenet.uz/21.html>> (April 11, 2007.)

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, <<http://politics.freenet.uz/22.html>>

The Watan Tarakiati Partiisa, WTP or Progress of the Fatherland Party, was created in 1992. When it was officially dissolved in 2000, its membership joined the Milliy Tiklanish Demokratik Partiiasi, MTDP or National Revival Democratic Party. This party “considers itself to be the party of professionals and educators, much like the historical Jadidist movement.”<sup>19</sup> Created in June 1995, this party has more than 50,000 active members and their overall objective is “national revival and national unity.”<sup>20</sup> Tashkent-born Hurshid Nabievich Dustmuhamedov is the current leader of the Milliy Tiklanish Party. Born in 1951, Dustmuhamedov is a journalist, and has acted as the deputy of the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan. Prior to 1994, there were 11 members, or 4.4 percent, of parliament representing the party.<sup>21</sup>

The Fidoqlar, or Self-Sacrificers, which prides itself as a political party for the youth, is well-represented in local councils. Fidoqlar was created in April 2000, and its more than 61,750 members believe “it is necessary to live...for the sake of the people, for the sake of the native land!”<sup>22</sup> Ahtam Salamovich Tursunov, the Chairman of the Committee of Defense and Safety within the Oliy Majlis, is the leader of the party. Prior to 2004, the party had 50 deputies active in parliament, making up roughly twenty percent of the Oliy Majlis population.

The Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, or UzLiDeP, was created in November 2003. This party believes that “one enterprising, courageous, vigorous, resolute business and vigilant man is better than thousand and thousand lazy, indifferent

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<sup>19</sup> Kangas, 136.

<sup>20</sup> “Political Parties” <<http://politics.freenet.uz/23.html>>

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, <<http://politics.freenet.uz/24.html>>



people.”<sup>23</sup> This party claims a membership of over 140,000 members, and is led by Mahammadjon Ahmatovich Ahmedjaniv. Ahmedjaniv was born in 1955 in the region of Ferghana. He joined UzLiDep in 2004, and in May of that same year, he became the Chairman of the Executive Committee of Political Council of Movement of the Businessmen within the party.<sup>24</sup>

The Birlik, or Unity, organization was founded in 1988, and aimed to build a more democratic and national identity. Members of Birlik were quickly targeted, and many individuals were persecuted. The Uzbek state generated every obstacle possible to prevent its acceptance, yet on November 11, 1991 Birlik was granted official status by. In 1992, Birlik was banned by the state. While no longer a legal organization, Birlik continues to attract members and form opposition to the state. The Erk Party, which expressed dissatisfaction with Soviet oppression and supported the creation of a democratic state, was also registered in 1991. Their calls for democracy did not fall into line with the authoritarian leadership of Uzbekistan, and the Ministry of Justice banned the party in 1993.

### **Regional and Local Governments**

Uzbekistan is comprised of twelve regions, the Republic of Karakalpakstan, 120 cities, 113 towns, 164 raions and 11,844 rural settlements.<sup>25</sup> The 12 oblasts, or regions, are Andijan, Bukhara, Djizak, Ferghana, Kashka-Darya, Khoresm, Navoi, Namangan, Samarkand, Surhan-Darya, Syr-Darya, and Tashkent. Karakalpakstan is an

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, <<http://politics.freenet.uz/25.html>>

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Kuatbay Bektemirov and Eduard Rahimov, “Local Government in Uzbekistan,” in *Developing New Roles in the Old Environment: Local Government in Eastern Europe, in the Caucasus and Central Asia.*, eds. Igor Munteanu and Victor Popa (Central European University Press, 2003), Chapter 9. 473.

autonomous region within Uzbekistan that, in 2000, had a population of 1.5 million.

Karakalpakstan retains its own constitution and has the right to secede from Uzbekistan, however, its local laws and its constitution greatly resemble that of Uzbekistan.

Furthermore, the capital city of Tashkent, which had a population of 2,135,500 in 2000, also elects representation to the central government.

Local government encompasses the administration of regions, districts, and cities, as well as self-governing systems that function within the local sphere but act outside of the scope of central administration. Each of the twelve regions, Karakalpakstan, and the city of Tashkent possess a hokim, or governor, and majlis, or council. President Karimov appoints each regional hokim, under the approval of the corresponding councils, to act as “both representative and executive authorities of their respective territories.”<sup>26</sup> These regional hokims then appoint city and district hokims, under the approval of each city or district council. Regional elections are held to elect council members, and each hokim serves as the Chairman of the Majlis and as the head of the hokimiyat, or local executive branch. Hokims hold a large amount of authority over their regions economic, social, and cultural developments. However, regional hokims are appointed by Karimov, and many times, regional and local decisions are simply “extensions of ... centrally-directed policies.”<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, policies directed by the central government ignore the interests of regional communities and limit innovation at the local levels.

In 1993, the Law on Community Self-Government was created. It offers a definition of self-government as

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<sup>26</sup> Sengupta, 287.

<sup>27</sup> Kangas, 139.

Independent activity by citizens, guaranteed by the Constitution and the Laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan, for the purpose of resolving issues of local important according to their own interests and history, as well as to national traditions, spiritual values and local customs.<sup>28</sup>

The mahalla exemplifies this definition of local self-government in Uzbekistan. In 1997, it was estimated that Uzbekistan had about 10,000 mahallas. These local communities can include anywhere between 150 to 1500 families sharing a territory. Mahallas are powerful in both rural and urban areas, and in cities, mahallas are formed by individuals sharing a residential quarter, suburb, or even apartment blocks. The Law on Community Self-Government was revised in 1999; however, this law hasn't prevented mahallas from retaining their societal importance and political role as informal institutions centered on familial, clan, and regional ties.

In the past and today, mahallas unite people through “traditions, customs, and human, business and legal relationships.”<sup>29</sup> This administrative system of mahallas illustrates the continuing importance of clan and familial ties within Uzbek communities. A general assembly of representatives elects a kengash, or council, who then elect a chairman, to lead the mahalla. Individuals living in the mahalla strive to “elect those who are familiar with popular customs and traditions.”<sup>30</sup> Often, mahallas select their leaders among traditional leaders, like as the village elders, or aqsaqallar. In recent years, the mahalla administration has been viewed more prestigiously by society, and the chairman and secretary have become paid positions. This suggests that self-governing local

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<sup>28</sup> Bektemirov, 475.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 477.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

institutions that center on clan and familial relationships, such as the mahalla, are becoming stronger in independent Uzbekistan.

Since independence, mahallas have been able to address and resolve many pressing economic and social problems. Recently, President Karimov has begun to recognize the importance of local governments to address “immediate social need.”<sup>31</sup> He argues that that mahalla “must become a reliable supporter and an efficient instrument of implementation of reforms.”<sup>32</sup> In his book, *Uzbekistan: National Independence, Economy, Politics, and Ideology*, he argues that

An important feature of [Uzbek] society is that it is based on the idea of collectivism, the unity of communal interests and the priority of public opinion. Therefore, mahallas play a major part in democratizing society and realizing its main principles, foremost that of social justice. Today, there is no other entity more knowledgeable about the real financial situation of local families and their spiritual and cultural interests. Mahallas are the fairest and most credible mechanisms for social support of the population and should become a reliable support and an effective instrument of reform in our society.<sup>33</sup>

While mahallas are extremely capable of distributing resources, the societal divisions engendered between mahallas must be considered.

Local and regional leadership offers Karimov a “means by which he can gauge the status of public opinion and potential problems in his country.”<sup>34</sup> In this respect, local and regional leaders become his “eyes and ears,” searching out questionable Islamic activities and reporting “suspicious individuals” to the central government.<sup>35</sup> However, this increases the dependence between local and regional organizations and the central

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<sup>31</sup> Kangas, 135.

<sup>32</sup> Sengupta, 289.

<sup>33</sup> Bektemirov, 477.

<sup>34</sup> Kangas, 135.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

government. Ultimately, this reliance impedes both the ability for regional governments to strengthen “their own capacity as legitimate political institutions” and the President’s ability to make decisions without considering local and regional political networks.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Uzbek State**

While the policy of National Delimitation officially created an Uzbekistan, it failed to create an Uzbek and did not forge strong national feelings among those living there. Unlike other Soviet republics, struggles for independence were rare in Central Asia. For the most part, clan-based societies were able to extract the political and economic necessities under Soviet rule, and the Central Asian states did not fight for independence. However, the Soviet Union collapsed, independence was granted, and the five republics had to choose which political trajectory to take. Michael Denison suggests that the five Central Asian republics were the “least prepared for independence when the Soviet Union abruptly disintegrated.”<sup>37</sup> Denison specifically addresses state and nation-building obstacles, primarily the fact that “gaining the unexpected and largely unwanted prize of political independence has required that Central Asians examine who they are, where they came from and what they want to be.”<sup>38</sup>

The artificial creation of the Central Asian states by Stalin’s imperialist intentions guaranteed that the “principle of sovereign, territorial rule has simply been the product of external dynamics.”<sup>39</sup> More than eight decades after National Delimitation, the notion of

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<sup>36</sup> Kangas, 136.

<sup>37</sup> Denison, “Identity Politics,” 58.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>39</sup> Rajan Menon and Hendrik Spruyt, “Possibilities for Conflict and Conflict Resolution in post-Soviet Central Asia,” In Barnett R. Rubin & Jack Snyder, eds., *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State-Building*, (New York: Routledge, 1998) 109.

state in Central Asia is still developing. The fact that independent Uzbekistan was created in spite of the fact that nobody “had to fight in order to bring it into existence”<sup>40</sup> further complicates the situation of state-building and forcing a national sentiment among those currently living in Uzbekistan.

Furthermore, the Central Asian republics entered into an international system where “sovereign, territorial rule is a prerequisite for recognition by and respect from states.”<sup>41</sup> This placed the Central Asian states at an automatic political and economic disadvantage in relation to long-established states within the international system. Furthermore, after a tough transition from Soviet rule to independence, these unstable political and economic units unable to effectively “place demands on their societies.”<sup>42</sup> Even if the society could handle these demands, Central Asians states’ “legitimacy to do so, [was] weak at best.”<sup>43</sup> Ultimately, Rajan Menon and Hendrik Spruyt conclude that these governments “lack positive state capacity.”<sup>44</sup> Not only does this lack of state capacity complicate nation-building efforts, but the strength of clan within society further complicates the post-Soviet transitions of the Central Asia states.

### **State-Building and Clans**

Soviet National Delimitation created artificial borders and forced a national identity on the citizens of Turkestan. This fostered local allegiances, which continue to hinder the “development of a common identity and lasting broader political loyalties.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Roy, viii.

<sup>41</sup> Menon, 109.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Bailey, *Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan*, 383.

Rubin asserts that today, “only a strong state can promote civic nationalism by integrating citizens into its institutions and protecting their autonomous activity in civil society.”<sup>46</sup>

Uzbekistan does not classify as a strong state, and suffers from weak national allegiance, the prevalence of regional loyalties, and the persistence of clan society.

Ernest Gellner maintains the notion that a “state functionally requires the elimination of lower-aggregate cultural and political attachments”<sup>47</sup> in order to thrive as a nation. From his experience studying the Middle East, Gellner has concluded that “evidence of [tribes] existence is considered tantamount to state ineffectiveness.”<sup>48</sup> In Uzbekistan, citizens continue to identify more with their clan group than with the state, challenging attempts to legitimize the state and engender a patriotic sentiment.

According to Menon and Spruyt, the clan-based societies of the Central Asian republics have not been able to form strong states. They assert that “rival forms of rule such as clan membership...and regional affinities have not been displaced by centralizing, high-capacity states.”<sup>49</sup> Instead, the centrality of clan connections and subsequent unwillingness to identify with the state presented a huge road-block for state- and subsequent nation-building.

In Uzbekistan, clans are insular factions that prevent loyalty to the state. Living together in kolkhozes and mahallas, clan members naturally looked towards local networks to gain access to social services, employment, and other advantages. This guaranteed that as Uzbekistan transitioned to independence, its citizens’ ultimate

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<sup>46</sup> Rubin, “Russian Hegemony,” 139.

<sup>47</sup> Schatz, 5.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Rajan, 109.

allegiance was to their clans and not to the state. A strong state requires the allegiance of its citizens; citizens of Uzbekistan turn to solidarity groups instead.

### **Tajikistan, Clans, and State-Building**

When Nation Delimitation created the boundaries of Tajikistan in 1924, it crippled the political elite and divided the ethnic Tajik population. Up to this point, the Tajik-intelligentsia had been based in Samarkand and Bukhara, both cities of modern-day Uzbekistan. The artificial boundaries of Tajikistan created a problematic situation, and fostered competition among regional factions within Tajikistan, primarily the Leninabadis, Kulabis, Gharmis, and Pamiris. Within these groups there were also “internal divisions” and separations that spoke to the larger north-south divide.<sup>50</sup>

The Soviet Union allowed and in some ways encouraged the power of clan-based groups, and the Tajik Civil War reflects the fact that policies of sedentarization not only united communities within the kolkhoz, but also created antagonisms among the population that had not previously existed. In Tajikistan, the kolkhozes become home to groups that had been forced to become sedentary. Not only were these communities reorganized in an “antagonistic mode,”<sup>51</sup> but food shortages and competition for land exacerbated these antagonisms. The Gharmi, Kulabi, Pamiri, and Leninabad factions were each relocated, becoming outwardly hostile as each strived for political and economic hegemony.

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<sup>50</sup> Roy, 113.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.



The Leninabadi clan was the first clan within Tajikistan, and it was organized in the north around the Tajikistan Communist Party and the Leninabad oblast. Rubin explains that the

Leaders of local power clusters at all levels (starting with kolkhozes and kishalks and ending in the Party's Central Committee) based their selection, distribution, and transfer of personnel on traditional, familial, friendly relations and cultural obligations, and on the need to secure followers.<sup>52</sup>

The Leninabadi clan formed an alliance with the Kulabis, who represented the south and were a more underground, mafia-like group. This network was based on more than ethnicity; the Kulabi district is around 60 percent Uzbek and 40 percent Tajik.<sup>53</sup> The Leninabadi clan controlled the administrative networks, the Kulabi clan was in control of the economic networks, and, though the Gharmis were active in education, they lacked the political and economic connections to form a "cohesive" clan.<sup>54</sup> The Pamiris were supported by the Soviet Union and emerged as Moscow's "watchdogs over both the Leninabadi apparat and the Kulabi underworld."<sup>55</sup>

When the Soviet Union collapsed, unlike the other Central Asian republics, the dominant clan in Tajikistan "controlled neither the security apparatuses nor the apparatus in the countryside. The Leninabadis controlled only the central political apparatus and their own province."<sup>56</sup> The struggle to consolidate power in Tajikistan after the collapse of the Soviet Union illustrates the negative effect that clan factions can have on state-

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<sup>52</sup> Rubin, "Russian Hegemony," 150.

<sup>53</sup> Roy, 113.

<sup>54</sup> Rubin, "Russian Hegemony," 152.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Roy, 114.

building. Roy refers to the Tajik Civil War, an intense power struggle among clan factions, as a “symptom of identity crisis.”<sup>57</sup> Rubin explains that

the descent into civil war mainly resulted from the breakdown of social control due to the dissolution of Soviet institutions. In the resulting insecurity, competitive mobilization led to escalation of conflict among patronage networks defined by the contours of elite recruitment in Soviet Tajikistan.<sup>58</sup>

Tajik leadership attempted to balance power among the clan groups in order to restore order. A coalition government was established but unable to end conflict or unite the different factions of Tajikistan. In November 1992, President Nabiyeu was forced to resign and all attempts to compromise failed. In November 1994 and February 1995, respectively, a constitution and parliamentary elections gave power to the Kulabis, who instead of running the state, “methodically set about plundering official positions and sources of wealth for the benefit of their faction.”<sup>59</sup> This created economic distress and raised the level of opposition towards the Kulabis. In January 1996, the government was confronted with a military uprising and in 1997, the Dushanbe government was replaced by a coalition government ruled by the Kulabi faction and the United Tajik Opposition, or UTO. This concluded the Tajik Civil War but did not eliminate the strong solidarity alliances that still exist and form divisive obstacles to effective state-building. The Tajik Civil War illustrates the destructive effect that clans can have on attempts for power consolidation and state-building. While Tajikistan was the only Central Asian state to fall into civil war after the Soviet Union’s collapse, all five Central Asian republics have

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 139

<sup>58</sup> Rubin, “Russian Hegemony,” 153.

<sup>59</sup> Roy, 141.

faced challenges and obstacles to establishing state institutions and fostering the allegiance of their citizenry.

### **Nation-Building**

The Central Asian republics had “no pre-Soviet state identity.”<sup>60</sup> As I mentioned in Chapter 2, prior to the Soviet Union’s policy of National Delimitation if you asked a Central Asian who he was, “he would first say that he is a Muslim and then point to his regional identity, if sedentary, or to his clan-based one, if nomadic.”<sup>61</sup> Not only is the lack of national identity the product of clan and regional loyalties, but the absence of national identity is reinforced by the strength of local identities (see figure 1).<sup>62</sup> In Uzbekistan, “in the struggle for political control or access to economic resources regional alliances often take precedence over an all-Uzbek identity.”<sup>63</sup> This phenomenon is also present in Tajikistan, where state breakdown is often attributed to its weak “nationalist legitimacy” combined with the strong “regionalism” forged by local identities.<sup>64</sup>

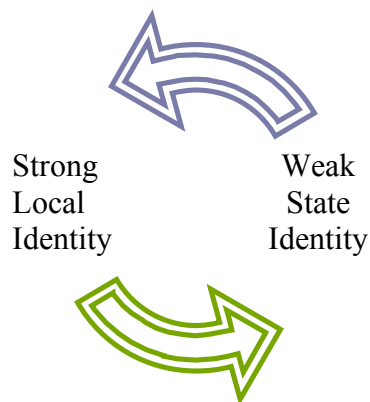


Figure 1

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<sup>60</sup> Rubin, “Russian Hegemony,” 135.

<sup>61</sup> Sengupta, 190.

<sup>62</sup> Rubin, “Russian Hegemony,” 135.

<sup>63</sup> Ella Akerman, “Power and Wealth in Central Asian Politics: Clan Structures versus Democratisation,” Conflict Studies Research Centre, May 2002: 1.

<sup>64</sup> Rubin, “Russian Hegemony,” 135.

During the Soviet era, titular groups were unable or unwilling to attract non-titular ethnic groups into an alliance. Thus, the problem arises today of “how can weak states induce sub-national ethnic, clan, and regional groups to recognize the legitimacy of a national state run by the titular nationality?”<sup>65</sup> Uzbekistan, which is around 80 percent Uzbek, is not exempt from facing the challenge of nation-building. However, in the case of Uzbekistan, it is regional and clan divisions within society that form fissures and challenge state consolidation

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the five Central Asian republics struggled to consolidate power. Citizens were forced to determine where their loyalty lay; many asserted their allegiance to their clan. This guaranteed that both the state and clans were involved in the transition from Soviet domination to independence. In Uzbekistan, like many other Soviet republics, the “boundaries of the state and non-state arenas were not distinguishable.”<sup>66</sup> In the early 1990s, the Central Asian republics worked to create their legitimacy without access to social services and resources that had been provided by the Soviet system. However, clans continue to fulfill the role of distributing resources, jobs, and social benefits. This elevates their position within the state in relation to formal institutions and bureaucratic organizations. This also prevents state-based institutions from gaining salience. The Uzbek state has been unable to promote durable formal institutions that provide the framework to foster national allegiance.

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<sup>65</sup> Menon, 110.

<sup>66</sup> A. Aydin Cecen, “Uzbekistan between Central Asia and the Middle East: Another Perspective,” In Korkut A. Erturk, ed., *Rethinking Central Asia: Non-Eurocentric Studies in History, Social Structure and Identity*, (Lebanon, Korkut A. Erturk, 1999) 131.

Furthermore, clans demand a high level of loyalty, which conflicts with the identity of the modern state. Kathleen Bailey argues that “only the repudiation and eradication of highly resilient kinship ties which promote ‘a narrow radius of identification and trust’ will allow a modern and progressive nation-state to emerge.”<sup>67</sup> While Uzbekistan contains all the trappings of a modern democracy, such as a secular outlook, a constitution, and a judicial system, these creations cannot hide the “system of authoritarian rule”<sup>68</sup> and repressiveness of the government. Clan society in Uzbekistan prevents the cultivation of state loyalty and the subsequent nation-building that many deem a prerequisite for democracy, a theory that I will explore further in Chapter Four.

### **Nation-Building in Uzbekistan**

With no history of statehood, the foundation of the Uzbek nation needed to be entirely constructed, and has been a “patching together of bits and pieces, rather than a return to historical roots”<sup>69</sup> Roy asserts that the first step of nation-building in Uzbekistan was the promotion of a flag, a national anthem, and other nationalistic symbols.”<sup>70</sup> Next, streets and institutions were renamed; Marx and Lenin Streets were replaced by Rashidov and Independence Streets. Then, Karimov worked to tear Uzbekistan away from its Soviet legacy. After rejecting Soviet history and declaring Tamerlane as Uzbekistan’s founding father, Karimov retraced Uzbekistan’s Timurid origins and the central place that Uzbekistan played in Transoxiana.<sup>71</sup> The irony of Central Asian nation-building is that the Soviet underlying of the state remains. Roy

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<sup>67</sup> Bailey, *Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan*, 382.

<sup>68</sup> Akerman, 1.

<sup>69</sup> Roy, 162.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>71</sup> Roy, 8.

asserts that “behind the fresh coats of paint, the presence of the USSR can still be read more or less wherever you look.”<sup>72</sup>

### **Nation-Building and Clans**

Benedict Anderson defines nations as “imagined communities.” Schatz questions the existence of clans, and why “communities continue to be ‘imagined’ on levels other than the national one, and why does the national one not supplant lower-level affiliations.”<sup>73</sup> He outlines the nation-building process as the process where “elites seek to foster allegiance to a higher-aggregate community,” often confronting “culturally plural societies whose loyalties are directed not toward the state and its agents, but rather toward the locale and local authorities.”<sup>74</sup> They act as small entities that prove difficult to integrate within a state, particularly because loyalty to the clan supersedes loyalty to the state. Clans’ “local focus of political allegiance”<sup>75</sup> prevents the “development of a common identity and lasting broader political loyalties.”<sup>76</sup> This situation is further complicated by the fact that Uzbekistan is a largely constructed nation, with a long tradition of clans and no history of statehood.

The presence of clans has further complicated and impeded nation-building. Akiner indicates that Central Asia’s new nationalism includes the “re-instatement of ‘traditional’ social, cultural, and ethical values as the basis for new state ideologies.”<sup>77</sup> Nation-building has not looked toward the Soviet era to develop its ideology, but to

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>73</sup> Schatz, 6.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>75</sup> Bailey, *Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan*, 383.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Akiner, 363.

traditional Uzbek society. This promotes clans and their influence on the formal and informal structure of the state, and Collins suggests that the Central Asian states transitioned into systems of “weak, clan-based authoritarianism.”<sup>78</sup>

As Gellner alludes to, clan attachments reduce the effectiveness of the state. Particularly in Uzbekistan, where clan loyalties play an active role in government decision-making and appointments, clans impede the formation of a nation-state. Clan groups have diverse concerns, and the formation of a national government that can adequately represent and address all of these interests is nearly impossible. In a society where clan alliances and divisions among clans dominate social and political relations, national cooperation is difficult to foster. Furthermore, in a state where clan interests are so varied, a national interest is difficult not only to defend, but also to create. Even President Karimov recognizes the lack of a national interest within Uzbekistan’s clan-based society, and prescribes that

A recognized unity of corporate (businessmen, intelligentsia, persons related to agriculture, etc.) nationwide interests, but not their kinship-based, territorial or ethnic affiliation, should become the foundation for the organizational consolidation of the individuals in our society.<sup>79</sup>

Schatz echoes that clans, as informal institutions, are strong obstacles to state- and nation-building attempts. However, he argues that the “successful construction of national identity does not require a concomitant destruction of local attachments.”<sup>80</sup> Unlike other experts on the issue, he believes that nation-building in a state where

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<sup>78</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 149.

<sup>79</sup> Karimov, *Uzbekistan*, 64.

<sup>80</sup> Schatz, 8.

subethnic divisions exist is rarely a “zero-sum” competition.<sup>81</sup> While acknowledging that clans create a problematic situation for nation-building, Schatz does not think that nation-building within a clan-state is impossible. On the other hand, he warns that this kind of “zero-sum thinking” can actual prevent “possibilities for their reconciliation”<sup>82</sup>

Kathleen Bailey disagrees, and from her studies concludes that clans negatively impede nation-building efforts. She observes how clans “stand in the way of the inculcation of higher loyalties and modern identities,”<sup>83</sup> and finds that, in many cases, loyalties to an individual’s clan are greater than loyalties to an individual’s state. In Uzbekistan, the inner workings of clan groups engender sentiments of favoritism and exclusion. In this setting, “what is a boon to individual members is a burden to the larger social unit.”<sup>84</sup> Citizens who do not belong to a clan, particularly ethnic Russians, are excluded from the advantageous relationship that clan allegiances provide.

It becomes challenging when a state like Uzbekistan is actively increasing its institutional capacity only to find that clans continue to support local institutions. Clan networks have a history of social responsibility to their community. The ability of clans to adapt quickly and locally to changing conditions ensures that clans can provide the necessary resources to its members quickly and efficiently. They foster reciprocal relations that ensure a relatively even distribution of scarce and desirable goods, resources, social services and jobs. While the state aims to provide public goods, “lower-

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>83</sup> Bailey, *Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan*, 380

<sup>84</sup> Schatz, 8.



aggregate networks provide goods to more limited populations.”<sup>85</sup> In this environment, it is the institution of clan and not any formal institution that “link[s] state and society.”<sup>86</sup> Given the choice, people will choose the “profound interpersonal trust” of the clan over the “anonymous transactions” of the market and other state-based institutions.<sup>87</sup> This trend is witnessed in modern-day Uzbekistan, where individuals still identify and actively participate in their clan.

While clans build connections and relations of reciprocity internally, they encourage divisions and competition externally. Clans promote exclusion, and Schatz speaks to the “clublike affiliations” that clans engender.<sup>88</sup> This fosters an unfavorable atmosphere for a state to address its citizenry as a whole. This is further complicated by the necessary “trade-off” between the interests of the state and the interests of subethnic groups. Schatz lists public goods, anonymous transactions, technical expertise and formal equality as entities valued by the state. Unfortunately, these do not reflect the interests of subethnic groups who seek to preserve “connections to kin or locale.”<sup>89</sup> This trade-off enhances the antagonistic relationship between the state and its clans, and makes compromise necessary for stability.

### **The Uzbek Case**

The top-down creation of the Uzbek state has created many problems, particularly after Soviet domination. Unlike the Communist leadership, Karimov has been unable to

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 146.

<sup>87</sup> Schatz, 9.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

“tap into the legacy of the Soviet Union and their ties to Moscow for public support.”<sup>90</sup> Instead, he has had to reinvent historical Uzbek figures to create an Uzbek historical legacy. By naming Tamerlane, whose empire was based out of Karimov’s own birthplace of Samarkand, “one of the first great Uzbeks,”<sup>91</sup> Karimov has set a historical foundation for his autocratic rule. Modern Uzbek history stresses how Tamerlane, a heavy-handed leader, was able to “overcome external threats and internal stability and create a state wherein culture, economy, and society” thrived.<sup>92</sup> Tamerlane and his political legacy has become Karimov’s symbolic basis for acting as a strong, heavy-handed leader who actively exploits regional and clan ties to maintain his control over Uzbekistan.

### **Identity Politics**

Schatz discusses the phenomenon of identity politics, which is not only a phenomenon that separates different groups, but also a tool of manipulation within groups. He states that

Identity politics is not simply driven by group solidarities that can be understood as static, but rather invariably include contests about the groups themselves. The assertion and denial of groupness becomes a central tool of the trade.<sup>93</sup>

Identity politics engender competition between ethnic groups, religions, and clans. Clan politics, as one of the least visible types of identity politics, creates an obstacle for both state- and nation-building. The centrality of clans to Uzbek social and political life “bring[s] the pull of locality and the preposition of alternative institutional orders to the

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<sup>90</sup> Kangas, 139.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Schatz, 19.

political game.”<sup>94</sup> This prohibits the foundation of political institutions and channels social trust into the localities, not the state. In Uzbekistan, identity politics can be seen most clearly by examining regional loyalties.

### **Regional Loyalties: The Continuation of Clans**

In Uzbekistan, Soviet domination brought about a “crystallization of political factionalism on a regionalist basis” that still manifests itself today.<sup>95</sup> As a Soviet republic, Uzbekistan benefited socially and economically from the informal networks and loyalties forged by clan connections. The breakup of the Soviet Union and newly gained independence of Central Asia led to the “recomposition of the world of politics around regional factionalism.”<sup>96</sup> When the state transitioned from the linkages of the Soviet system to independence, the Central Asian states suffered economic and social devastation on many levels. Kathleen Collins asserts that clans are more likely to “flourish in weaker transitional and postcolonial states, which suffer from declining economies and weak or incipient institutions.”<sup>97</sup> The instability created by the collapse of the Soviet Union provided political space for clans to regain power and reassert themselves in formal networks.

Kathleen Collins outlines three ways that clans have pursued their participation in formal Uzbek politics. First, clans have infiltrated the executive institution of the state, effectively manipulating the powerful networks created by the ministries to benefit their own informal networks. Secondly, the state lacks a political ideology like communism to

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>95</sup> Roy, xiii.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

<sup>97</sup> Collins, “The Logic,” 236.

unite people. Instead, Collins asserts that post-Soviet politics is about “bargaining among three or four major clans for the control of economic resources.”<sup>98</sup> Lastly, clans have “subverted or replaced the formal institutions that lack state and society.”<sup>99</sup> Post-independence electoral results and the lack of support for political parties provide support for this conclusion.

Not only have political parties not gained much widespread support, but Collins points out a similar lack of support for trade unions, religious and ethnic groups, and corporatist structures. This phenomenon is counterbalanced by the large support given to leaders with big personalities and large clan followings. While the Oliy Majlis provides a small check on President Karimov, it continues to promote a large degree of regional factionalism in the central government. In the March 1999 Oliy Majlis election, citizens were allowed to nominate their own candidates. This resulted in less than 50 percent of seats being represented by the five official political parties. Elected independents representing various clan networks made up more than 50 percent of seats.<sup>100</sup> This creates a large issue for non-titular groups living within Uzbekistan, who are not represented by clans and lack a real source of governmental representation. Furthermore, it allows powerful clan leaders to remain “under the president[’s] constant watch and control.”<sup>101</sup>

Kangas likewise does not think the continuation of clans today is unusual, given the history of Uzbekistan. He asserts, “given the weakness of the formal political system,

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<sup>98</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 146.

<sup>99</sup> Collins, “The Logic,” 252.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, Page.

<sup>101</sup> Frederick Starr, “Clans, Authoritarian Rulers, and Parliaments in Central Asia,” Central Asia-Caucas Institute Silk Road Studies Program, June 2006, 10.

it is not surprising that the informal channels of power, as developed through the pre-Soviet and Soviet eras, remain paramount in the continuation of presidential authority.”<sup>102</sup> Unlike Russia, Eastern Europe, and the Balkan states, Central Asia does not have the “formal institutional mechanisms linking state and society.”<sup>103</sup> Thus, clan networks and regional loyalties have become “increasingly active in the villages, and have largely usurped both the interest-aggregation role of parties and the role of the state in distributing resources, jobs, and social benefits.”<sup>104</sup> Maintaining clan networks are also important not only for political promotions, but economic advancement as well. Akerman asserts that “clan members who are in power, as well as people in partnership with top government officials, enjoy favorable conditions to accumulate wealth.”<sup>105</sup> This includes distributing economic resources to clans by dividing the assets of various lucrative industries, primarily cotton, gas, and gold and Coca-Cola.

Coca-Cola’s involvement in Uzbekistan highlights the complexities of the clan, familial, and regional connections that play a powerful role in national economic and political policy. Collins asserts that the marriage of President Karimov’s own daughter, Gulnora, to Mansur Maqsudi, the head of Coca Cola’s Uzbek partnership ensured “Coca-Cola’s monopoly” within the country.<sup>106</sup> However, after their separation in 2001, Uzbekistan’s national security service “raided the bottling plant” and investigations into

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<sup>102</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 137.

<sup>103</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 148.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Akerman, 4.

<sup>106</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 147.

the company led Maqsudi to lose out on his share in the Coca-Cola plant.<sup>107</sup> In 2006, Maqsudi accused the Coca-Cola Company of “conspir[ing] with the government of Uzbekistan.”<sup>108</sup> Ackerman notes that this situation exemplifies the “importance of family ties for a successful business and the potential pitfalls of this strategy in the event of a deterioration of relations.”<sup>109</sup>

### **Clan Politics**

Schatz provides an explanation not only for the persistence of clans under post-Soviet rule, but also for the specific appearance these clans have developed. During the reign of the Soviet Union, “everyday affairs [in Central Asia] centered on questions of goods procurement, and access networks became increasingly important, useful, and reliable for ordinary people and elites alike.”<sup>110</sup> This encouraged clan leaders to develop effective networks that ensured goods and social services were distributed to each clan group. This economic purpose brought clans “closer to essential political questions of goods distribution.”<sup>111</sup> It is not uncommon for regional elites to form alliances, and compete with other regional elites for “scarce resources and political power.”<sup>112</sup> Regional loyalties continue to play a huge role in post-Soviet politics, and there exists a strong correlation between Uzbek “administrative divisions and ‘solidarity groups.’”<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Edward Alden and Andrew Ward. “Uzbekistan: Coca-Cola accused over Uzbek Venture” CorpWatch June 13, 2006 <<http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=13721>> (April 19, 2007.)

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Ackerman, 4.

<sup>110</sup> Schatz, 18.

<sup>111</sup> Schatz, 19.

<sup>112</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 138.

<sup>113</sup> Roy, 98.

Struggle over resources has led to clan conflict and efforts to balance the clans within the formal sectors of the Uzbek state.

The national government employs different economic methods to arouse more regional support; however, these policies often exacerbate regional competition. In the 1990s, a Samsung plant was opened in Samarkand and a Daewoo plant was opened in Andijan. The establishment of these two plants was an example of the government using “investment opportunities to solidify support.”<sup>114</sup> Also, the government has built up support in Jizak, the region of Rashidov, by implementing many construction programs and other opportunities that benefit the local populations. Kangas terms this the process of “terminal spoils,” a technique used to address the informal regional networks within Uzbekistan.<sup>115</sup> I explore more manifestations of clan in the formal economic and political spheres of Uzbekistan in Chapter Four.

### **Islam Abduganievich Karimov**

Samarkand-born Islam Karimov is an example of an individual who worked the Soviet system for his own personal and professional gains. He attended the Tashkent Institute of National Economy and Central Asian Polytechnic, and holds degrees in economics and engineering. He has also received honorary degrees from nine foreign institutes of higher education. Karimov is currently married to an economist, Tatyana Akbarovna, and they have two daughters and three grandchildren.

In 1960, when he was only twenty-two, Karimov became an engineer for the Tashkent Aviation Factory. In 1966, he became involved in the State Planning Agency

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<sup>114</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 140.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

(Gosplan) of Uzbekistan. In 1983, Karimov was appointed as the Minister of Finance, and in 1986 he became the chairman of Uzbekistan's branch of Gosplan. On July 23, 1989, Karimov was elected First Secretary by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan. Some argue that he was simply a "compromise candidate" who could be easily controlled.<sup>116</sup> Political power-houses Mirsaidov and Jurabekov did not believe that the Soviet Union would support their candidacies and looked to Karimov as an individual who "could be controlled from within the apparatus, outside of the purview of Moscow's gaze."<sup>117</sup> Karimov took this office "without fanfare and...much internal support."<sup>118</sup> In December 1991, Islam Karimov was elected president of Uzbekistan with 86 percent of the popular vote. Karimov took the oath of office with one hand on the Constitution and the other hand on the Qur'an.

In the election of 1991, Karimov faced active opposition, particularly from Mohamed Saleh, the leader of the Erk party, who received 12 percent of the vote, Abdullah Utayev, the leader of the Islamic Renaissance Party, and the Birlik Party. All three of these political parties are now banned. In 1995, Karimov expressed a desire to extend his first term until 2000 and only one individual in the Oliy Majlis voted against him. In March 26, 1995, a referendum passed with 99 percent of the vote that extended Karimov's tenure until 2000. On January 9, 2000, Karimov ran for re-election with the support of the party Fidokorlar. His competition included Abdulxafiz Jalolov, the

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<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*



candidate from the National Democratic Party of Uzbekistan.<sup>119</sup> Karimov secured 91 percent of the vote, successfully being re-elected to serve a second presidential term.

Roger Kangas refers to the Karimov Presidency as “Amir Timur revisited.”<sup>120</sup> However, he also introduces the idea that a strong leader, such as Karimov, was not necessarily undesirable at such a time of uncertainty.<sup>121</sup> Shortly after independence was proclaimed, President Karimov repeatedly expressed of the need to “build a new house before destroying the old one.”<sup>122</sup> By presenting himself as a “fatherly figure”<sup>123</sup> and the “caretaker and cultivator of a new, national history,” Karimov was able to establish

himself as an essential figure in modern Uzbekistan by making Uzbeks proud of their collective past. In all of this, there is a surprising lack of a ‘cult of personality’ that one might expect in such a situation. Indeed, his repeated statements of *not* having one are important in the eyes of the public. However, Karimov *is* noted as a strong leader who can manage the complex array of issues confronting the new state of Uzbekistan.<sup>124</sup>

Kangas further speculates that “despite what some outside observers suggest, [Karimov] is truly a popular leader in the country and would, in most instances, win free and fair elections were they to be held.”<sup>125</sup> However, given the economic and political developments within Uzbekistan since Kangas made this statement, I would argue that it is no longer accurate.

### **Karimov and Clans**

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<sup>119</sup> “The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan” Political System of Uzbekistan <<http://politics.freenet.uz/1.html>> (April 11, 2007).

<sup>120</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 131.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

Kathleen Collins states that, since 1991, Central Asians have “repeatedly worried aloud about the corruption and destabilization sown by *klannovayapolitika*,” or clan politics.<sup>126</sup> Clans are met with a degree of unwantedness within Uzbekistan, as well as the international community. In his book, “Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century: Challenges to Stability and Progress,” President Karimov himself dedicates an entire chapter to discussing clans, regionalism, and its implications for Uzbekistan. He believes that it is “quite natural for people to provide mutual aid to each other when they are related to some extent by kinship.”<sup>127</sup> However, he argues that clans become dangerous when

through groups based on kinship, regional or ethnic principles are developed (mostly informal) in governmental or other structures, prompted by their narrow interests, and these groups promote their interests over the interests of the state to the detriment of the common cause and nationwide interests; when in order to achieve their goals such groups plan to move up their members into the existing state power or other sorts of hierarchy.<sup>128</sup>

Uzbekistan faces this dangerous situation today. Not only do clans threaten state stability and encourage power struggles, but they impede the formation of a national identity. Officially, Karimov states that the Uzbek government is “striving for the elimination of such a corrupt legacy.”<sup>129</sup> Karimov reiterates that

It is not regional self-consciousness that ought to determine the national self-identification of an individual: a person must, first and foremost, perceive himself as a citizen of Uzbekistan, and only then as an inhabitant of Khorezm, Samarkand or the Ferghana valley.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 142.

<sup>127</sup> Karimov, *Uzbekistan*, 60.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

Clans have no room to exist within a government that is striving to unify under an Uzbek identity. However, despite Karimov's realization that clan allegiance should be weakened, his actions continue to emphasize clan.

Kathleen Collins accuses President Karimov of turning the “dangers of clans” into a “favorite theme” of his political rhetoric<sup>131</sup> He has repeatedly called for “getting clans out of politics.”<sup>132</sup> However, while Karimov has officially denounced clans and announced his efforts to eliminate regional factions within the government, he himself is guilty of clan politics, frequently maneuvering clan members around to consolidate his own power and reward those who are loyal to him. It is important to consider that Karimov does not originate from a huge clan or family following.<sup>133</sup> However, he has used the environment of regional loyalties to his favor, effectively maneuvering state and regional leadership in order to benefit certain groups and disable others. This type of government, where clans and regional loyalties are means of manipulation, lacks a “sense of trust and punishment/reward” that engenders distrust and hinders cooperation.<sup>134</sup>

The Uzbek government continuously tries to deny the existence of clan politics. Despite the fact that clan politics are antithetic to a nationalistic policy, the “post-Soviet political shape of Central Asia is being molded against the backdrop of this regional ‘clanism.’”<sup>135</sup> Sengupta further explains that the

Uzbek state has attempted to deny the existence of clan politics in the republic and has instead propagated a unifying nationalist policy. The Uzbek state is depicted as being free/of religious, linguistic, and regional divisions. The state

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<sup>131</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 142.

<sup>132</sup> Collins, “The Logic,” 224.

<sup>133</sup> Kangas, “Uzbekistan,” 138.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Sengupta, 285-6.

represents clanism as contrary to national interest and strives to erase memories of regional loyalties and sub national affiliations. This policy has been less than successful due to enduring group feelings in such regional centers as Khorezm, Bukhara, and the Ferghana Valley.<sup>136</sup>

### **Conclusions**

In this chapter, I have explored the different elements of Uzbek independence and subsequent nation-building, and how clans exerted their might after the collapse of the Soviet Union. While the transition was stable, unlike the transition in Tajikistan, the state is embedded with regional interests and clan-based interactions dominate the public and private spheres of society. Uzbekistan transitioned into a “clan-based authoritarian government,” and regional allegiances have shaped the first fifteen years of independence. Karimov has aimed to consolidate power in his hands, reinventing himself as the Tamerlane of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He is quick to make decisions that reinforce the same clan connections that he criticizes, and actively works to balance clan interests while maneuvering the government to serve his own needs. The ongoing influence of clans and their potential to prevent state stability, nation-building, and democracy presents a constant threat to the state and people of Uzbekistan. In Chapter Four, I analyze attempts at democracy and the policy decisions, rhetoric, and authoritarian actions of President Karimov. I also illustrate through an elite analysis how clan politics continue to play a strong role in national, regional, and local politics.

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter 4

### Clans and Democracy: A Mismatch?

A democratic nation requires the existence of state-wide cooperation and the ability to display “allegiance to the larger community.”<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, Uzbekistan lacks both of these. Samuel Huntington and Kathleen Bailey both argue that a nation-state must be founded before a democratic government can be created. As I explained in Chapter Three, allegiance to clan remains larger than allegiance to the state and, while clan identity creates an environment of trust and reliance, it also leads to a level of competition and distrust within society. These factors prevent nation formation and hinder democratic development in Uzbekistan.

### Post-Soviet Transitions in Central Asia

Huntington classifies a third wave of states that recently transitioned to democracy, relating these developments to the collapse of the Soviet Union. His study is inappropriate for the Central Asian region, which did not follow the typical pattern and has largely “settled down to one shade or another of authoritarianism in which informal, clan-based networks [dominate] political life.”<sup>2</sup> Kathleen Collins asserts that the Central Asian states today have transitioned towards a “weak, clan-based authoritarianism.”<sup>3</sup> This chapter will explore whether this clan-based, autocratic system is compatible with the institution of democracy.

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<sup>1</sup> Bailey, *Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan*, 390.

<sup>2</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 138.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

Michael McFaul offers an applicable model for studying the Central Asian region by offering a “set of causal paths from ancient regime to new regime that can account for both...democracy and dictatorship.”<sup>4</sup> He hypothesizes that countries where “dictators maintained a decisive power advantage”<sup>5</sup> did not experience successful democratic transitions after the collapse of communism. Even before the Central Asian states were declared independent, many of them had already established clan pacts and named legitimate power brokers. When these countries became independent, these power brokers were largely unwilling to distribute power to other factions within society.

I believe that two factors encouraged the state of Uzbekistan to retain its system of “clan-based authoritarianism.” The first factor is Islam Karimov, who was raised in the Soviet system and has proved that he will do anything to retain his power. The second factor is Uzbekistan’s clan-based society, which is not the direct cause of autocracy, but which constitutes an undemocratic entity that perpetuates the lack of democratic development in Uzbekistan.

### **Clan Pact**

Uzbekistan was not the only Central Asian republic that was founded on a clan pact. Excluding Tajikistan, the Central Asian republics all entered independence with a legitimate broker responsible for balancing clan interests within the central government. The elites whom supported these pacts were able to face the constraints of the system and manipulate clan networks in order to influence the system. Thus, clan pacts affected the maneuverability of clan representatives within each transitional government. While

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<sup>4</sup> McFaul, “The Fourth Wave of Democracy” 213.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 214

much of the theory focusing on Latin America and Southern Europe argues that pacts such as these make democratization more likely, in Central Asia, clan pacts directly influenced the durability of the regime without influencing the type of regime that was founded. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan moved in a more democratic direction, Tajikistan collapsed into a civil war, and Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan developed into autocratic regimes. Collins, who has completed extensive field research in Central Asia, compares Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, stating that all three of these republics started “from about the same place with the same markers.”<sup>6</sup> She states that each state had:

- ~ clan and tribal divisions with deep historical roots stretching back before the Soviet era
- ~ a weak sense of national identity
- ~ an Asian-cum-Muslim culture and religious climate
- ~ a 70year old history of oppressive Soviet rule
- ~ political institutions imposed by communism
- ~ ethnonational divisions between Turkic, Persian and Slavic groups
- ~ economic development based on the exploitation of natural resources<sup>7</sup>

However, these three Central Asian clan-based societies took different political trajectories after the Soviet Union collapsed, supporting Collin’s supposition that clan pacts were not the factor that determined post-Soviet political trajectories in Central Asia. Both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were founded on clan pacts, however, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, these two republics moved in “polar-opposite directions politically.”<sup>8</sup> In Kyrgyzstan, the regime encouraged privatization and incorporated other democratic features into the state, alongside the existence of clan identities. In

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<sup>6</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 138.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

Kyrgyzstan, strong regional identities between the north and the south “not only [allowed] a certain degree of independence from the centre, but also participation in the political process.”<sup>9</sup> The transition in Kyrgyzstan, which was referred to as an “island of democracy” in the early 1990s, differed greatly from the transition in Uzbekistan, where a repressive, Soviet-like regime was retained.<sup>10</sup>

At independence, President Karimov was responsible for brokering a “more tenuous, loosely networked pact” than the clan pact forged in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>11</sup> This generated low levels of social trust, greatly limiting the “political space available to accommodate a democratic transition.”<sup>12</sup> While Kyrgyzstan was able to privatize its business ventures, Uzbekistan was prohibited from privatizing large businesses because it would “have upset the fragile political balances in the country.”<sup>13</sup> Uzbekistan transitioned to authoritarian rule largely because it “promised to resolve a genuine problem in the polity [clan allegiance] that might otherwise have posed dangers the state’s very existence.”<sup>14</sup> Amidst the instability created by the collapse of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan’s clan-based society, instead of fighting for the implementation of a democracy, invested in Karimov and his ability to represent clan interests and stabilize the republic.

### **Clan-Based Central Asian Societies & Democracy**

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Akerman, 5.

<sup>11</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 145.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Frederick Starr, “Clans, Authoritarian Rulers, and Parliaments in Central Asia,” Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies Program, June 2006, 13.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.



All five Central Asian republics have no history of statehood, never mind notions of democratic statehood. Michael Denison further explains how historically in Central Asia

There was no tradition of representative governance, let alone liberal democracy. Prior to their incorporation into the Tsarist, and later, Soviet empires, the Central Asian lands had been home to steppe and mountain nomads and sedentary farmers subject, to a greater or lesser degree, to a shifting and overlapping patchwork of khanate and clan authority.<sup>15</sup>

In the case of Uzbekistan, clan-based society, strong manifestations of regionalism, and an opportunistic leader all made for un-democracy friendly conditions. Despite the fact that Uzbekistan has a literate, well-educated population, a more clannish, autocratic political system was founded after the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>16</sup> However, it is important to realize that the “lack of certain democracy-friendly preconditions does not preclude elite-driven democratization or even social support for democracy.”<sup>17</sup> In Kyrgyzstan, initial reforms to democratize and the Tulip Revolution of 2005 illustrate that democratic values are not incompatible with Central Asian society.

Additionally, it becomes important to study the political will of the elites when studying democratic development throughout Central Asia. Huntington recognizes that a democratic system will only be introduced when both the conditions favorable to democracy and the motivations of political leaders exist within the state.<sup>18</sup> While one could assume that the Central Asian leadership is similar in its political outlook and background, Frederick Starr argues that Central Asian leadership is diverse in thought

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<sup>15</sup> Denison, 58.

<sup>16</sup> Eickelman, 174.

<sup>17</sup> Collins, “Pacts,” 150.

<sup>18</sup> Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 107.

and political will.<sup>19</sup> In Uzbekistan, Karimov continues to follow autocratic rulings and undemocratic policies to consolidate his personal power. However, autocracy in Uzbekistan is more than just the result of Karimov's ambitions; the undemocratic nature of Uzbekistan is maintained and perpetuated by its clan-based society, which is exclusive, corrupt, illusory and inherently undemocratic.

### **Clans and Democracy**

In my introduction, I introduced three possible affects that clans can have on efforts to democratize: first, that they encourage democracy; secondly, that they impede democratic development; and lastly, that they neither support nor prevent the process of democratization. I questioned the possibility that clans can serve as small civil society groups that promote plurality and democracy. After researching clans and their affects on Uzbek state and society, I have concluded that clans are in fact undemocratic entities that encourage exclusion, corruption, and competition within society.

In Chapter Three, I introduced clans' negative affect on nation-building efforts. The continuance of clans as the primary source of identity has not only prevented nation-building, but has also hampered democratic development. Bailey argues that the clans "defy centralization of state power, resist national consolidation, promote parochial fissures and fractionalize authority."<sup>20</sup> These features of clan limit the regime's ability to function as a nation, thus limiting its ability to develop into a democratic state.<sup>21</sup>

### **Clans and Social Capital**

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<sup>19</sup> Starr, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Bailey, 397.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 380.

Do clans, as important political actors and social authorities, contain any social capital that could influence the political trajectory of Uzbekistan towards a more democratic system? I have concluded that clans, due to their divisive and competitive nature, do not provide a social organization that can be used to democratize. Robert D. Putnam, author of many books, including *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*, defines social capital as “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.”<sup>22</sup> Social capital helps create and maintain a democratic society. Unfortunately, clans cannot be classified as a source of social capital. In fact, clan groups actually hinder civil society, according to Putnam's argument that

networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust. Such networks facilitate coordination and communication, amplify reputations, and thus allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved. When economic and political negotiation is embedded in dense networks of social interaction, incentives for opportunism are reduced. At the same time, networks of civic engagement embody past success at collaboration, which can serve as a cultural template for future collaboration. Finally, dense networks of interaction probably broaden the participants' sense of self, developing the “I” into the “we,” or (in the language of rational-choice theorists) enhancing the participants' ‘taste’ for collective benefits.<sup>23</sup>

In terms of the culture of clans, particularly the manifestation of clans in Uzbekistan, these entities do not form adequate sources of social capital. Clans encourage competition between clans for limited resources and desirable administrative positions and do not foster “generalized reciprocity.” This type of competition does not foster “social trust,” as clan groups become extremely suspicious of other clan groups and

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<sup>22</sup> Robert D. Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital,” *Journal of Democracy* 6.1: January 1995, 67.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

their motives. This distrust and the fact that clan groups have diverse interests and varied needs prevent clans from cooperating through “collective action.” Furthermore, under Soviet rule, informal networks and political maneuvering became the approach that clans used to obtain goods, services, and political appointments. Lastly, clan allegiances breaks down the “I” and stresses the “we” within the clan; however, clans are insular and promote intolerance towards non-clan members. Putnam argues that “trust lubricates social life.”<sup>24</sup> The lack of social trust in Uzbekistan’s clan-based society ensures that citizens do not resist the undemocratic environment that perpetuates the autocracy of the state.

In theory, a democratic state guarantees the same rights, the same access, and the same opportunities to its citizenry. In her study, Bailey highlights the “cleavages”<sup>25</sup> that clans promote, which fragment society and lead to the marginalization of various social groups and individuals. Individuals “cannot easily enter/exit a clan, as one would a voluntary association or interest group.”<sup>26</sup> Clans in Central Asia, because they are regional-based, often exclude non-titular ethnic groups living within the state. Collins emphasizes that ethnic Russian citizens have “little or no political representation” because they typically do not belong to clans.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the centrality of clans in society prevents voluntary associations and interest groups from succeeding. This prevents the formation of a united Uzbek citizenry and a civil society that can supersede clan ties.

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<sup>24</sup> Robert D. Putnam, “The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life,” The American Prospect, Inc. 4.13, 1993. (<http://www.prospect.org/print/V4/13/putnam-r.html>)

<sup>25</sup> Bailey, *Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan*, 383.

<sup>26</sup> Collins, “The Logic,” 232.

<sup>27</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 148.

Furthermore, clans are opaque social groups that breed corruption and lack democratic transparency. Bailey describes clans as “conducive to endemic and ruinous corruption.”<sup>28</sup> Clan groups form the ultimate patronage networks and members of clans use loyalties and linkages to gain economic goods and political positions. Through the Soviet era, clans in Central Asia developed many informal and illegal avenues to guarantee the well-being of their members and their representation within the state. As the five Central Asian republics transitioned to independence, “political actors exploited this opacity to their own ends.”<sup>29</sup> Clan members often participate in economic and political transactions that classify as kleptocracy. This practice is extremely undemocratic, and propagates unfair advantages to those in power. Collins emphasizes that the “corruption and destabilization sown”<sup>30</sup> by clans is absolutely antithetical to democratic values.

Clan leaders obtain and distribute scarce resources within their clan group, forging a high level of social trust; however, the solidarity networks and social trust ends with members of one’s own clan. The networks of trust that lead to the attainment of goods and services for some, led to the absence of those same goods and services for others. Within a clan-based society, rewards are not handed out due to an individual’s merit. Clan loyalty and favoritism count more than merit and provide the key to obtaining a good education and job, and gaining access to limited goods and services. Collins notes that clan elites provide the “political, social, and economic opportunities to

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<sup>28</sup> Kathleen Bailey, *Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan*, 390.

<sup>29</sup> Schatz, 19.

<sup>30</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 142.

the members of their respective networks, and in return count on these members' personal loyalty and respect to maintain their status."<sup>31</sup> Clans breed favoritism based on loyalty, a notion that is completely antithetical to the democratic values of merit-based opportunities.

Furthermore, the centrality of clans presents a direct challenge to the democratic values of accountability, contestation, participation, representation, and the separation of powers.<sup>32</sup> Within a clan-based society, participation in the state is stifled by participation in the clan, preventing civic engagement. In terms of democratic representation, clan alliances supersede organizations such as unions and political parties, which promote plurality and participation in government. Furthermore, the infiltration of clan leaders who use clans as means to promote their own personal agendas impedes the formation of democracy in Uzbekistan.

### **Authoritarian Rule over Clan-Based Society: A Self-Perpetuating Cycle**

It has been determined that clans within society do not determine the political trajectory of a transitioning state; however, clans are undemocratic entities that exist within the state, penetrating the government through informal and formal networks. Research studies indicate that clans are opposed to democratization, and do not only impede the creation of civil society, but reinforce informal networks that operate outside of the state while creating undemocratic exclusions that divide society. While Uzbekistan is an opaque, repressive and authoritarian state, its clan-based society is also very undemocratic.

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Collins, "The Logic," 245.

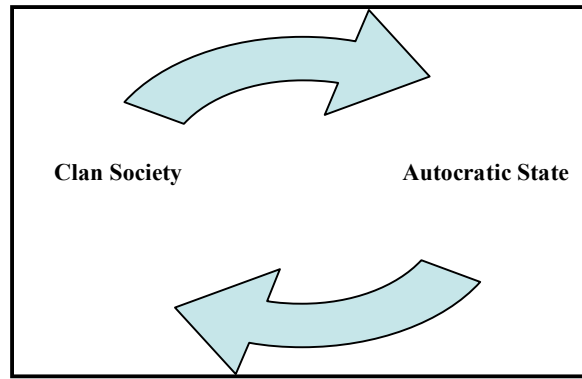


Figure 3

Earlier in this chapter, I introduce two factors responsible for Uzbekistan's autocratic government: Karimov's own personal agenda and clan-based society. While Karimov can certainly be held responsible for the fact that Uzbekistan is undemocratic, blaming him for the transition to autocracy is "too easy."<sup>33</sup> Clans must also be held accountable for the undemocratic nature of the Uzbek state.

The combination of an autocratic government and a clan-based society presents an interesting situation in terms of Uzbekistan's political and economic landscape. Besides the obvious hindrances to democracy, such as the lack of checks and balances, the lack of a middle class, the lack of religious freedom and the freedom of expression, democracy in Uzbekistan is also thwarted by Uzbekistan's clan-based society. Clans are informal, opaque, corrupt networks that breed undemocratic values and present a huge challenge for the evolution of Uzbekistan's political landscape. The strict rule of Karimov combined with Uzbekistan's undemocratic society has created a self-perpetuating cycle that prevents the formation of a nation-state and the development of democracy (see figure 3). Uzbekistan's clan-based society did not directly cause an

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<sup>33</sup> Collins, "Clan," 146.

undemocratic state. However, in Uzbekistan, the undemocratic features of society parallel the undemocratic features of the state.

The autocratic state is reinforced by clan allegiances, which are maintained largely because of the undesirable features of authoritarian state. In order to combat the repressiveness of and address the dire political and economic situation created by the authoritarian state, the Uzbek population maintains its clan-based connections. However, the strength of Uzbekistan's clan-based society prevents individuals from fighting for more democratic freedoms and reinforces the undemocratic features of the state.

Furthermore, clan-based society fosters distrust, which leads to the support of a strong leader who can balance clan interest. This heavy-handed leader, Karimov, has himself been raised in Uzbek society, which is satiated with corruption and fosters informal loyalties, engenders intolerance, and normalizes participation in exclusionary networks. Karimov then elects state and local administrators who espouse the undemocratic values that growing up in a clan-based society have indoctrinated them with.

Once in power, Uzbekistan's leaders benefit from the spoils system of patronage and do not exert any effort to democratize the system, which would require them to sacrifice some of their power and economic privilege. Karimov himself has consolidated his own political power by manipulating clan allegiances, using state networks to advance his personal agenda and benefit his region of Samarkand. Other local and national leaders similarly represent their own regions. In return, society supports these autocratic elites who are perpetuating the authoritarian system. As this cycle continues,



Uzbekistan is averted from emerging as a strong democratic nation. In order to democratize Uzbekistan, efforts must be made to democratize both the state and society. If not, the self-perpetuating cycle described in Figure Three will continue to reinforce undemocratic values in Uzbekistan.

### **President Karimov, Clans, and Democracy**

President Karimov ascended to the presidency as the result of a clan pact, not because of the overwhelming support of the Uzbek people. He lacks historical legitimacy and must engender his own support by creating an environment where clan groups are not only balanced but endlessly coddled. Karimov constantly follows authoritarian measures and makes autocratic decisions in order to stabilize the state and prevent large scale clan conflict that would not only challenge his power, but greatly jeopardize the stability of the entire region.

In terms of clans, Karimov has covered the spectrum from denying they exist to enthusiastically stating that clan allegiances need to be eliminated. President Karimov himself acknowledges the problems that clans present for democracy formation. He declares that

Extending democratic reform and reinforcing the supremacy of universal human values in people's consciousness in society as a whole (a scrupulous work), and struggling with the problems caused by those who espouse ethnic and national self-isolation, are primary conditions for security the national independence, sovereignty and stability of Uzbekistan, and for averting the danger of regionalism and clan-influence.<sup>34</sup>

While highlighting the “danger” that clan groups present for Uzbekistan, Karimov expounds the notion that he supports the extension of “democratic reform.” However,

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<sup>34</sup> Karimov, *Uzbekistan*, 65.

contrary to this declaration, Karimov has “methodically set about establishing a presidential regime and marginalizing his opponents.”<sup>35</sup> This is in no way leading to democratic reform and further enhances “clan-influence” within the state.

### **Democratic Rhetoric**

Among the President of Uzbekistan’s official responsibilities is his role as the “guarantor of democracy.”<sup>36</sup> Soon after Uzbekistan was declared an independent state, the government made a large effort to explain the “development of formal political institutions as a way of proving that the country’s system was well on its way to becoming a democracy.”<sup>37</sup> If one were to look analyze Karimov’s speeches, interviews, and public addresses, one would conclude that President Karimov is attempting to position Uzbekistan in a more democratic direction.

However, Karimov supports the notion of “culturally appropriate democracy.”<sup>38</sup> In his February 1995 speech at the first session of the newly elected Oliy Majlis he argued that “while the aim was to build a state based on democracy, it should harmonize with the basic moral principles of the Uzbeks society.”<sup>39</sup> He then explained that the values of “consistency and gradualness” are particularly important to democratization in this part of the world.<sup>40</sup> Karimov said

The Orient on the contrary presupposes that democracy is based on the ideas of collectivism, paternalism, and priority of public opinion. The democratic process

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<sup>35</sup> Roy, 133.

<sup>36</sup> “About Uzbekistan” Embassy of Uzbekistan to the United States 2004  
<<http://www.uzbekistan.org/uzbekistan/political>> (April 12, 2007.)

<sup>37</sup> Kangas, 134.

<sup>38</sup> “The Roberts Report on Central Asia and Kazakhstan: Analysis on the Political Economic of Greater Central Asia,” <<http://roberts-report.blogspot.com>> (April 23, 2007.)

<sup>39</sup> Sengupta, 289.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

is developing influences by such features of or people as law obedience, priority of moral and spiritual principles in political relations. It is necessary to take this into account when trying to determine the system of social management.<sup>41</sup>

Many would find fault in this reasoning, which expounds an adverse attitude towards adopting democratic reforms. In Central Asia, where “who decides what is and is not culturally appropriate...is concentrated in so few hands,”<sup>42</sup> the notion of culturally appropriate democracy seems another method for President Karimov to maintain social and political control while seemingly promoting liberal values.

### **Undemocratic Action**

While many of Karimov’s speeches include democratic hopes and plans, his actions speak much louder than his words. The Press Service of Uzbekistan states that Uzbekistan’s policy of reform has “at its target the formation of the democratic state system protecting the most important human rights and freedoms: the right of political choice, freedom of worship, freedom of speech and of the mass media.”<sup>43</sup> However, the administrative structure of Uzbekistan has made few efforts to democratize the state and there is nothing democratic about Karimov’s repressive and quasi-dictatorial acts. In fact, Ella Ackerman concludes that the government of Uzbekistan has “long abandoned democracy in favor of consolidated autocracy.”<sup>44</sup> Karimov often marginalizes his opponents by engineering political maneuvers and restructuring the government. In order to balance out clan rivalries, Karimov’s appointments and removals have become

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> “The Roberts Report on Central Asia.”

<sup>43</sup> “Uzbekistan Today,” Press Service of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan <[http://2004.press-service.uz/eng/knigi\\_knigi\\_eng/knigi\\_eng1.htm](http://2004.press-service.uz/eng/knigi_knigi_eng/knigi_eng1.htm)> (April 24, 2007.)

<sup>44</sup> Ackerman, 7.

motivated by clan divisions within the state. This fosters a system of klannovayapolitika that dominates the informal and formal structure of the Uzbek state.

### **Klannovayapolitika**

In Uzbekistan, clan elites, interests, and loyalties not only dominate local politics, but also infiltrate the formal state government. Klannovayapolitika, is a powerful form of identity politics that fosters informality and normalizes corruption. Bailey argues that the main clan groups in Uzbekistan are “engaged in an incessant struggle and endless competition for power and influence.”<sup>45</sup> She describes their objective to “place as many members as possible in government posts where they can exact bribes” and gain access to scarce resources and vital political capital.<sup>46</sup> Once clan elites have entered the political structure of Uzbekistan, they mobilize their personal and clan-based agendas through the formal channels of the state. This system of clan politics fosters distrust and insecurity in an already precarious political environment.

In Uzbekistan, the current regime fosters clan allegiance and caters to the demands of a clan-based system. Collins suggests that clans’ infiltration in politics create “clan hegemony” within the state.<sup>47</sup> Within this type of hegemony, “clans are the central actors, rationally pursuing the interests of their members.”<sup>48</sup> Uzbekistan, as a “weakly institutionalized state” has become an “arena within which these informal social networks...jostle, contend, and combine in pursuit of their respective interests.”<sup>49</sup> Clan politics covets a clan hegemony that is extremely unstable and potentially volatile, and

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<sup>45</sup> Bailey, *Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan*, 391.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Collins, “Clan,” 143.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

while undemocratic, this system is not purely authoritarian either.<sup>50</sup> In Uzbekistan, the transition to independence illustrated Karimov's own "weakness" in delivering the economic and social resources needed for his state to succeed. This insecurity encouraged President Karimov to strengthen his "de facto powers."<sup>51</sup> Today, Karimov reshuffles the state and local leaders in an effort not to improve the inner-workings of the government, but to counterbalance his own weakness as an authoritarian ruler. In addition, his political engineering discourages innovation at the local levels, dampens efficient policy implementation, and hinders economic and social development. Though Uzbekistan is an autocratic government, it is actually "under-governed" and lacks the strong leadership that it needs.<sup>52</sup>

### **Elite Analysis**

In Uzbekistan, there are many clan factions. These include the Samarkand clan, which encompasses the Samarkand, Bukhara, Jizak, and Navoi oblasts; the Tashkent clan; the Ferghana clan that includes the Ferghana, Andijan and Namangan oblasts; and the Khorezm clan that includes Khorezm and southern Karakalpakistan. The Samarkand, Tashkent, and Ferghana clans are considered to be the most central to the state and have developed a strong political rivalry. Karimov has the power to appoint hokims, judges, and ministers, and manipulates these appointments to serve clan interests.

Karimov, who originates in the Samarkand region, is constantly maneuvering the state leadership to maintain a clan balance, address clan interests, and prevent large-scale

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Starr, 13.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

competition and conflict. Recently, it has been theorized that the Samarkand faction has become so powerful that the Tashkent and Ferghana clan have formed a coalition. In my analysis, I often refer to the Tashkent clan, but it is important to realize that in some cases, individuals of the Ferghana and Tashkent clan may be cooperating to counter the power of the Samarkand faction. The goal of my elite analysis is to offer a breakdown of clan representation within the state that can be used to make accurate deductions of the current leadership of Uzbekistan and the infiltration of the state by clan elites and their interests.

## **Clan Politics at the National Level**

### **Tashkent Faction**

At the time of independence, Timur Alimov was the State Councilor for Human Resources, and also the head of the Tashkent Clan. The Tashkent clan included representatives within the national security, defense and law enforcement spheres. This included Rustam Inoyatov, the Chairmen of National Security Service, Kadyr Gulomov, the Minister of Internal Affairs, and Rustam Azimov, the Minister of Defense. Eurasian Analyst also notes that Tursinkhan Khudaibergenov, State Councilor for Law Enforcement, Bakhadyr Matlyubov, Minister of the Interior, Rustam Azimov, the first Prime Minister, Elyor Ganiev, the Minister for Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade, Rashid Kadyrov, Prosecutor General, Batyr Parpiyev, Head of the Tax Committee, and Minister of Defense, Kadyr Gulomov belong to this faction.

### **Samarkand Faction**

At the time of independence, Ismail Jurabekov was First Vice Prime Minister and leader of the Samarkand faction. Former Minister of Finance Jamshed Saifiddinov, Former Minister of Justice Alisher Mardiyev, and Former State Council for National Security Gulomov all belonged to this clan. Former Minister of Internal Affairs Zakir Almatov, Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyoyev, State Council for Human Resources Sayfiddin Ismoilov, Minister of Culture and Sports Alisher Azizkhoev, and Head of the Antimonopoly Committee Jamshed Saifiddinov are loyal to the Samarkand faction. Today, the informal head of this faction is Zilemkhon Khaidorov, who formally acts as Head of the Presidential Apparatus.

### **Ismail Jurabekov**

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Ismail Jurabekov supported Karimov as the broker of the clan pact. Jurabekov proved to be a powerful politician, holding senior positions in the Uzbek regime for almost two decades. He also proved to be a difficult politician to have removed from office. In January 1999, when he was serving as Deputy Prime Minister, Karimov forced Jurabekov to resign. The following month, there was a series of explosions in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent. While the banned Erk Party was officially blamed for the violence, many do not believe Erk was at fault. Some speculate that Jurabekov and/or his clan supporters were responsible for the explosions. While there is little proof to support this conjecture, given the nature of the Uzbek political system, it can be reasonably speculated that these explosions were the result of clan politics. In fact, Jurabekov was appointed the presidential advisor on water and agriculture issues only a month after the bombing and two months after his initial

removal from the government. This strongly suggests that Jurabekov and/or his clan were behind the bombings.

Another hypothesis was also put forth, proposing that the explosions were a violent act of either the National Security Services, led by Rustam Inoyatov, or the Interior Ministry, led by Zakir Almatov, to intimidate and weaken the other. This scenario is also plausible, and highlights the influence of clans in the political arena and the violence they can engender.

At the end of 2002, the Tashkent clan aimed to remove Jurabekov from power. However, their political maneuvering proved futile, and instead, Karimov had Timur Alimov, the leader of the Tashkent faction and the State Councilor for Human Resources, dismissed. The State Councilor for Human Resources is a powerful position within the Uzbek government, and by removing Alimov, Karimov sent a strong message to the clan factions of Uzbekistan that he remained in charge.

In 2004, Karimov attempted again to dismiss Jurabekov from the government, this time discharging him from his position as presidential advisor and conducting a criminal investigation against him. In April 2005, rumors circulated that Jurabekov had fled the country with former Justice Minister Palvanzoda. Furthermore, in mid-2005, as the Tashkent-Samarkand rivalry continued to heighten, Alimov was dismissed from his presidential advisory post. The removal of both Jurabekov, who was supported by the Samarkand faction, and Alimov, who was supported by the Tashkent faction, demonstrates the effort that Karimov exerts to prevent either the Tashkent or Samarkand factions from gaining political dominance. If one faction was able to dominate the other,



there is no telling what kind of repression, conflict, and violence would arise, in addition to the threat that would arise to Karimov's own position within the government.

## Rivalry within

### Ministries

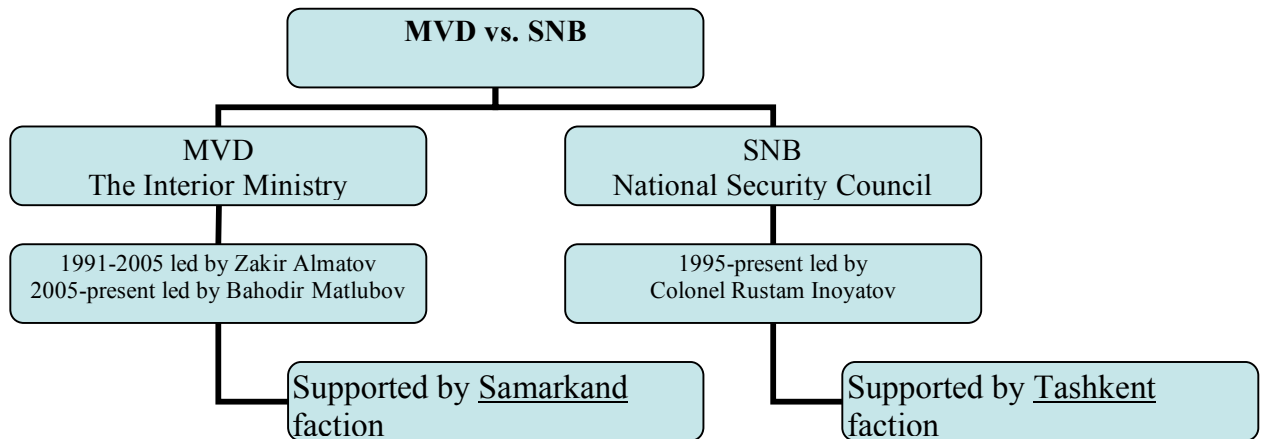


Figure 4

### Zakir Almatov

Colonel-General Zakir (Zakirjon, Zakirzhon) Almatov, who was supported by the Samarkand clan, led the MVD as the Interior Minister from 1991 until 2005. He was born in Tashkent in 1949, and served in the Soviet Army. He received a degree in law from Tashkent State University and, in 1971, he began working at the Interior Ministry. In 1991, he was appointed Interior Minister, and one of his primary responsibilities, as Chief of Security, was to oversee the police force of Uzbekistan. Over his long reign,

Almatov turned the ministry “into the country’s most powerful and numerous force,” a force that left the “security services and the army far behind.”<sup>53</sup>

Almatov was supported by the police forces and during the May 2005 events, he was able to quell the opposition. However, soon after the rebellion, his popularity began to fall. Many of his own police lost their lives, and those who didn’t lost their respect for Almatov. After the massacre, the Interior Ministry’s Special Forces unit, the “most elite regiment in the organization,” was transferred under the jurisdiction of the National Security Service and the Ministry of Defense, further discrediting his position and strengthening the power of the SNB.<sup>54</sup>

In June 2005, Almatov left the country. In July, the Ministry denied rumors that he had suffered a stroke, yet acknowledged that Almatov was out of the country on a “short-term vacation.” In December 2005, he resigned as the Interior Minister, referring to his poor health as the primary reason for his decision. Before his resignation, Almatov had been the “longest-serving minister in the government”<sup>55</sup> and a likely successor of Karimov. His resignation signaled a drastic shift in the power ministries and the elimination of a potential successor and political threat of Karimov.

In December 2005, it was reported that Zakir Almatov was replaced by Anvar Salikhibayev, former deputy chief of the National Security Service. This was considered

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<sup>53</sup> “Islam Karimov Vs. The Clans,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty April 22, 2005  
<<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/04/51d08217-f03f-4906-9cc7-6224a3cff08b.html>> (April 22, 2007.)

<sup>54</sup> Mikhail Zygar, “The Clan’s Warfare,” July 4, 2005  
<[www.kommersant.com/page.asp?idr=1&id=588621](http://www.kommersant.com/page.asp?idr=1&id=588621)> (April 19, 2007).

<sup>55</sup> “Uzbekistan: Karimov Appears to Have Political Clans Firmly in Hand,” August 31, 2006  
<<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/08/970cdfca-adb7-4c9c-856b-526cef00273b.html>> (April 17, 2007).

a “bold political move,”<sup>56</sup> considering the rivalry between the Interior Ministry and the National Security Service. However, these rumors turned out to be false, and on January 5, 2006, President Karimov appointed Lieutenant General Bahodir Matlyubov of the Tashkent clan the new Minister of Internal Affairs. Matlyubov had been serving as the chairman of the State Customs Committee, and continues to head the MVB today.

### **General Rustam Inoyatov**

General Rustam Inoyatov has been the director of the National Security Service since 1995. He was born in June 1944 in the Surhan Darya Province of Uzbekistan. He attended the Tashkent Faculty of Oriental Studies and worked as a construction worker in Tashkent. He served in the Army and KGB, and now heads the SNB. Inoyatov wields his support from the Tashkent clan, and is seen as a powerful contender for the presidency.

### **MVD vs. SNB**

The two most important ministries in Uzbekistan are the Interior Ministry (MVD) and the National Security Council (SNB). These two institutions and their leadership are believed to be pillars of Karimov’s power.<sup>57</sup> The rivalry between these two ministries is constantly being balanced by Karimov through “power shuffles” and other acts of political maneuvering.

In 2004, explosions went off in Tashkent and Bukhara. Some speculated that the explosions were organized by the SNB to target the MVD. There is no proof to support this theory; however, violence such as this is only one of the dirty tricks played in the game of clan rivalries. After the explosions, Almatov disappeared for several days. This

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> “Islam Karimov Vs. The Clans.”

is quite suspicious considering that Almatov was responsible for investigating the bombings. This violent competition makes one question the stability of Uzbekistan, when the MVD-SNB rivalry could potentially trigger a Civil War between the Samarkand, Tashkent, and other clan factions (see figure 4).<sup>58</sup>

The competition between the Samarkand and Tashkent clans, represented by the MVD and SNB, deepened throughout 2005, particularly regarding the succession of Karimov.<sup>59</sup> In February of that year, rumors began to spread that Karimov was preparing to remove Almatov, Inoyatov, or both of these powerful Uzbek leaders. However, either these rumors were unfounded or Karimov modified his plans after the events of the Kyrgyz Tulip Revolution and the Andijan uprising.

Prior to May 2005, Almatov and his Samarkand clan was suggested to be the much stronger faction. However, after the events at Andijan and Almatov's dismissal from the Ministry, the scale has tipped some. His disappearance from the political arena, along with other political reshuffles following the events of Andijan, supports the supposition that the "Andijan events themselves were just a part in the local clans' fight for power."<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, in this fight for power, Karimov's decision to fire Almatov and appoint Matlyubov was a significant blow to the Interior Ministry and a victory for the Tashkent faction.

### **Prime Minister**

#### **Otkir Tukhtamuradovich Sultanov**

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<sup>58</sup> Chris Seiple, "Understanding Uzbekistan," Foreign Policy Research Institute June 1, 2005 <<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/20050601.centralasia.seiple.uzbekistan.html>>. (April 27, 2007.)

<sup>59</sup> Zygar, "The Clan's Warfare."

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

Otkir (Utkir) Tukhtamuradovich Sultanov was born in 1939. Karimov appointed him Prime Minister of Uzbekistan in December 1995. Eight years later, in December of 2003, Sultanov was demoted to Deputy Prime Minister, with jurisdiction over engineering, metallurgical, oil and gas and chemical industries and geology. On April 3, 2006, he was replaced as deputy Prime Minister by Ergash Shaismatov.

### **Shavkat Mirziyyayev**

Shavkat Mirziyyayev was born in 1957 in the Jizak region of Uzbekistan. He is a graduate of the Tashkent Irrigation Engineering and Agriculture Mechanization Institute. Before being promoted to the Ministry, Mirziyyayev was the administrative head of a district in Tashkent, then a governor of Jizak, and then the governor of Samarkand. On December 12, 2003, Mirziyyayev replaced Otkir Sultanov as the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan and continues to serve as Prime Minister today.

While “explaining the need to appoint Mirziyyayev, Karimov told parliament that more emphasis must be placed on the country's agriculture.” Karimov added that Mirziyyayev was “very familiar with the situation in the country's regions and its agriculture.” While Karimov explained his decision to replace Sultanov with Mirziyyayev, a member of the Samarkand clan, based on their agricultural and industrial tendencies, it can be argued that this reshuffle was motivated by clan realignment in the government. My supposition is further supported by the fact that Abdulaziz Kamilov was removed from his post as Foreign Minister just a few months before Sultanov. These events point to an effort by Karimov to further consolidate his power through political reshuffling within the Ministries.

## **The Foreign Ministry**

### **Abdulaziz Xafizovich Kamilov**

Abdulaziz Xafizovich Kamilov was born on November 16, 1947 in the province of Tashkent. In 1994, he was appointed the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan. In March 2003, he was dismissed. Ironically, this came just a few months before Otkir Sultanov's December 2003 resignation. The subsequent removals of these two individuals from Tashkent and Samarkand-supported Mirziyyayev's appointment to Prime Minister signal a political engineering policy enacted by Karimov to consolidate his power against regional allegiances.

### **Sodyk Safayev**

Sodyk Solihovich Safayev (Sodiq) was born around 1954. In 1993, Safayev briefly served as the Foreign Minister. Between 1999 and 2000, he was the Uzbek ambassador to the United States. As of 2002, Safayev was the First Deputy Foreign Minister. In March 2003, Safayev was appointed Foreign Minister, a position that he held until 2005. Safayev was seen as a "talented lobbyist with strong ties to the US,"<sup>61</sup> and his promotion was seen as a gesture of Uzbekistan's desire to strengthen relationships with the United States. In February 2005, he was stripped of his title of Foreign Minister and demoted to the position of Chairman of the Interparliamentary Relations Committee of the Uzbek Senate. Elyor Ganiev, a member of the Tashkent faction, took his place.

### **Elyor Ganiev**

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<sup>61</sup> Gulnoza Saidazimova, "Uzbekistan: Can New Governments Bring Any Change?" February 9, 2005 <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/pp020905.shtml>> (April 19, 2007).

Elyor Ganiev was born in 1962 and became involved in the government first serving as the Deputy Prime Minister and head of Uzbek Foreign Economic Relations Agency. In February 2005, he was appointed by Karimov as the Foreign Minister and Deputy Head of Cabinet. In July 2006, Karimov had him removed from those same positions. In July 2006, with a background in economics, he became the Minister of Foreign Economic Affairs, Investments and Trade, a position he continues to hold.

### **Why the Shuffle from Safayev to Ganiev?**

Safayev was not only well-received in the United States, but a very powerful and connected Uzbek politician. In September 2005, it was rumored that he had married Gulnara Karimova, the President's daughter. He was even frequently mentioned as a possible presidential successor, although the Uzbek Foreign Ministry ultimately denied both the rumors of wedlock and the "speculation that Karimov had anointed Safayev his presidential successor."<sup>62</sup> However, why did Karimov engineer the removal of such a powerful force in Uzbekistan and a favored ambassador to the United States? Was it simply an act of fear that Safayev was becoming too popular or well-known? Or, did the reshuffle signify a shift in Uzbekistan's foreign policy, and the shift away from relations with the United States and towards Russia. Or, was Safayev's removal a manifestation of Karimov's clan-based balancing act?

Some support that this move was meant to be telling of Uzbekistan's increasing uncooperative attitude towards the United States. However, others argue that the Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan does not have the political power to initiate the country's foreign

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

policy. Unless this move was a mere symbolic act of transgression, it was not the direct result of a change in foreign policy.<sup>63</sup> Muhammad Salih, the exiled leader of the Erk Party and one who is privy to the inner workings of the Uzbek government, says that in “terms of fidelity to Karimov’s regime, Safayev and Ganiev are in the same group.”<sup>64</sup> This suggests that this move was not the result of Karimov’s insecurity, but a possible maneuver to ensure that the Tashkent and Samarkand clan factions remained balanced.

Not only did Karimov appoint Ganiev to Foreign Minister, but he also promoted Rustam Azimov from Deputy Prime Minister to First Deputy Premier. The promotion of these two individuals, who are both supported by the Tashkent faction, balances Karimov’s promotion of Buritosh Mustafaev to Minister of Justice.<sup>65</sup> Both Salih and Musayev conclude that with these reshuffles, Karimov secured his domination over clan factions and came “closer to his goal of absolute presidential power.”<sup>66</sup>

### **Vladimir Norov**

On December 29, 2004, Vladimir Norov was appointed the Ambassador of Uzbekistan in Belgium. Less than two years later, Norov, an ethnic Russian, was promoted Foreign Minister, a position he continues to hold. After the violence sown in Andijan, the United States and the European Union heavily criticized the government of Uzbekistan, while Russia demonstrated its approval for the government’s violent actions. Norov, along with officials from the prosecutor General’s Office, the Justice Ministry, and lawmakers of the Oliy Majlis, is part of the group of politicians and lawmakers who

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*



were reshuffled after the Andijan crisis. Ironically, the promotion of Norov, who is not ethnically Uzbek or clan affiliated, coincided with Uzbekistan's drastic foreign policy shift. Karimov's engineering of a non-Uzbek in such a high-ranking ministry signaled Uzbekistan's foreign policy shift away from the West and towards the East. Norov continues to hold this position; however, it is probable that Norov will be demoted or removed if Russia becomes too involved in Uzbekistan's policy-making.

### **Defense Minister**

#### **Kadry Gulomov**

In November 2005, Karimov forced Kadry (Qodir) Gulomov to resign from his position as Defense Minister. Gulomov, a physicist, was then appointed the presidential advisor. In May of that same year, he was brought to court, found guilty of financial crimes and sentenced to prison for a "suspended" term. A member of the Tashkent clan, Gulomov's removal was forced "soon after the dismissal of his close relative and a one time leader of the Tashkent clan, Timur Alimov, from a presidential advisory post."<sup>67</sup> It is difficult to separate these two political dismissals, particularly because of Gulomov and Alimov's personal relationship and the fact they were both powerful members of the Tashkent clan. Furthermore, as the Tashkent-Samarkand rivalry heightened, Jurabekov, former leader of the Samarkand clan was dismissed in 2004 and Alimov, former head of the Tashkent clan, was removed in 2005. In this instance, the clan-based engineering in Karimov's political maneuvers cannot be denied.

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<sup>67</sup> "Uzbekistan: Karimov Appears to Have Political Clans Firmly in Hand," August 31, 2006 <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/08/970cdfca-adb7-4c9c-856b-526cef00273b.html>>. (April 17, 2007).

### **Ruslan Mirzayev**

In November of 2005, Ruslan Mirzayev was appointed Defense Minister, replacing Kadyr Gulomov. Prior to this, Mirzayev, described as a “fairly young and athletic officer,”<sup>68</sup> was the Secretary of the Security Service. It is argued that his career is successful because of the initial support he received from Inoyatov of the Tashkent clan. His appointment is a demonstration of how important personal connections are within a clan-based government such as Uzbekistan’s. While Mirzayev’s education and previous experience could have merited his promotion to this position, what is highlighted in his biography is his connection to political powerhouse and Tashkent-supported Inoyatov. This makes it apparent that merit was not what led to his appointment.

### **Justice Minister**

#### **Abdusamad Palvanzoda**

In 2002, Abdusamad Palvanzoda (Polvon-Zoda) of the Samarkand clan was appointed Justice Minister. He served until 2004, and in 2005, it was rumored that he fled the country with Jurabekov.

### **Buritosh Mustafaev**

In February 2005, Karimov promoted the head of Central Election Committee, Buritosh Mustafaev, to Justice Minister. Mustafaev, a member of the Samarkand clan, still serves as the Justice Minister and acts as the Chairman of the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan.

### **Finance Minister**

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<sup>68</sup> “Ruslan Mirzayev is new Defense Minister of Uzbekistan,” November 18, 2005 <<http://enews.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=1146>>. (April 18, 2007).

### **Mamarizo Nurmuratov**

Mamarizo Nurmuratov was born in the region of Samarkand in 1960. He studied at the Leningrad Institute of Finances and Economics, majoring in economics. In 1982, he joined the teaching staff at the Tashkent Institute of Economy. In 1985 until 1988, he furthered his education at the Moscow Institute of Finances. He then began to tutor at the Tashkent Institute of Economy, and from 1991 until 1993, he was an Assistant Professor at the Institute. From 1993, Nurmuratov served as the advisor to the chairmen of the Central Bank, director of a research center, assistant and senior assistant chairman of the Central Bank. In 2000, he replaced Rustam Azimov as Finance Minister. In July 2004, he became Hokim of Samarkand and Saidakbar Rakhimov is appointed Finance Minister. He was replaced by Rustam Azimov in 2005.

### **Rustam Azimov**

In November 2005, Rustam Azimov was re-appointed Finance Minister at the age of 46. He was also promoted to senior deputy premier, making him the second most important member of the Cabinet and giving him direct access to the President. On July 25, 2005, Azimov was relieved of duties as First Deputy Vice Prime Minister and Minister of the Economy and appointed the Minister for Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade. In 2006, Elyor Ganiev, also of the Tashkent faction, was appointed Minister of Foreign Economic Affairs, Investments and Trade and Botir Khodjaev became Economic Minister, replacing Vyacheslav Golyshev.

### **Balancing Tashkent and Samarkand**

Unlike Rakhimov, Azimov was able to speak English and was familiar with many financial creditors. This made him a likely appointment for Finance Minister; however, many people were under the impression that his political career was dwindling. These individuals were “flabbergasted” by his promotion.<sup>69</sup> Sergei Yezhkov, a reporter for Ferghana.Ru, poses the following question:

How come the former senior deputy premier, someone very many in the corridors of power would have been happy to see gone for good, rises to the surface again and again is put in charge of national finances?<sup>70</sup>

He concludes that Karimov was running out of loyal officials to promote during his reshuffles, encouraging him to turn to Azimov.

To discover the real root of the promotion, it is important that we analyze the influence of clans in this political maneuvering. Azimov has not only proved his loyalty to Karimov, but he is a member of the Tashkent clan. Many have asserted that Azimov’s promotion was a way for Karimov to balance the Tashkent clan against the Samarkand clan. It was reported that Azimov was “supposed to serve as a counterweight to the growing clout of Shavkat Mirziyyayev, 42, a representative of the Samarkand clan.”<sup>71</sup> The Tashkent-based Sociologist Musayev asserts that Karimov “shuffles his Cabinet as a way of maintaining balance between different political clans.”<sup>72</sup> It is quite possible that Karimov turned to Almatov as a means to reinstate his own control over clan-based

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<sup>69</sup> Sergei Yezhkov. “Comments on Rustam Azimov’s promotion to Finance Minister.” [Ferghana.ru](http://ferghana.ru) November 26, 2005  
<<http://enews.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=1159&PHPSESSID=8ee9a21d49deb7d0599d74b3e10971e9>> (April 19, 2007).

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Arkady Dubnov. “The President of Uzbekistan is the One and Only Diplomat.” February 7, 2005.  
<<http://enews.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=802>> (April 19, 2007)

<sup>72</sup> Saidazimova, “Uzbekistan: Can New Governments Bring Any Change?”

divisions within Uzbekistan. Musayev indicates that Karimov shuffled Azimov and Ganiev, both members of the Tashkent faction, to balance off not Mirziyyayev but Mustafaev, another powerful member of the Samarkand faction. Both of these explanations illustrates the consistent effort by Karimov to consolidate his own power while balancing the Tashkent and Samarkand clan factions within Uzbekistan.

## **Clan Politics at the Regional Level**

### **Andijan Province**

#### **Kobiljon Obidov**

From 1993-1996, Kobiljon Obidov served as the hokim of Andijan. In 1996, he was transferred to Tashkent and made the senior deputy premier in charge of agriculture and water. In 1998, Obidov was named the “Hero of Uzbekistan” and awarded the “Gold Star,” the highest decoration awarded in Uzbekistan. In 2000, Obidov was again appointed as Hokim of Andijan, serving until 2004. On May 25, 2004, an emergency meeting of the Andijan Regional Kengash was called to discuss Obidov’s performance as Hokim. President Karimov attended the meeting, where it was decided that Obidov had not served his duties well and should be relieved.

After the Andijan Massacre, it was rumored that Obidov had suggested the attempt to release the prisoners from jail, essentially organizing the massacre. Even though Obidov was not even serving as hokim when the actual events occurred, he still bore a lot of the responsibility for “Black Friday.” He was arrested following the massacre and detained in a Tashkent jail. He was eventually charged with orchestrating the events of May 13<sup>th</sup> and sentenced to a year in prison by a Tashkent Municipal Court.

Furthermore, there is a warrant out for Obidov's son, Ulugbek. Since May 2006, Ulugbek has been classified as wanted for crimes that were committed when his father served as Hokim of Andijan.

### **Saydullo Begaliyev**

Saydullo Begaliyev was appointed Andijan Hokim after Obidov's dismissal. This was a risky move, due to the fact that Obidov was heavily supported by his Ferghana clan, and Begaliyev represented another clan faction.<sup>73</sup> Once hokim, Begaliyev, a former Minister of Agriculture and Water, immediately purged Obidov's allies and cracked down on his supporters. These political developments, largely motivated by clan politics and regional alliances, were at the root of the massacre.<sup>74</sup> Begaliyev's crackdown led to the arrests of twenty-three businessmen who resisted, and the situation that followed quickly escalated into chaos. The massacre at Andijan highlights the instability and disorder that clan politics can reap within a society and illustrates the level of undemocratic development in Uzbekistan.

On October 13, 2006, Begaliyev was removed as governor of Andijon and Obidov was moved from house arrest into a Tashkent prison. While officially accused of "command-administrative methods, neglect of people's need, fakery, and idleness," Begaliyev was arrested in wake of Andijan and many have assumed that Begaliyev's unexpected resignation is connected to the massacre.

That same day, President Karimov addressed the Andijani Kengash about the events of "Black Friday." He mentioned socioeconomic conditions as an explanation for

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<sup>73</sup> Lillis.

<sup>74</sup> Najimova.

the demonstrations. Many people saw this rhetoric as an admittance of the administration's failures to provide for its' citizens. However, it is important to focus not only on Karimov's words, but also his actions. After the massacre, powerful officials of the Andijani Municipal and regional administrators were either arrested or removed from office. Obidov, Begaliyev, and many others were purged in yet another effort by Karimov to consolidate his power and balance regional factions.

### **Andijan: A Game?**

It has been suggested that Andijan was an "inter-clan struggle for state power"<sup>75</sup> and many argue that the events were not a grassroots movement but motivated by ruling elites and regional alliances. Prior to the massacre, the struggle between the MVD and SNB heightened as rumors circulated that Karimov was ill and likely to leave the presidency in a few years. Furthermore, some reason that the Andijan event was just another response by Almatov and Inoyatov to Karimov's "radical cadre reshuffling in 2004 [and] 2005."<sup>76</sup> This potentially included Almatov and Inoyatov's own political ouster, a rumor that was circulating prior to the massacre.

In fact, a political scandal erupted surrounding the Interior Ministry just a few weeks before the Andijan crisis. In April 2005, a website began to publish letters under the pen name Safar Abdullaev. Abdullaev claimed to be a high ranking official from the Interior Ministry who had "changed his mind" about certain political policies.<sup>77</sup> In all, ten letters were published that revealed the brutality of the Interior Ministry and its plan

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<sup>75</sup> Rustam Burnashev and Irina Chernykh, "Changes in Uzbekistan's Military Policy after the Andijan Events," *China and Eurasian Forum Quarterly*, 5. 1, 2007: 69.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Zygar, "The Clan's Warfare."

of repressions, “2005-2007.” In addition to describing this plan to target “Uzbek oppositionists, independent journalists and human rights activists,” the letters revealed specific names of those who were targeted.<sup>78</sup> The letter also spoke of Karimov’s illness, saying that he was poisoned by Almatov. The last of the Abdullaev letters admitted that in “order to save himself, Almatov might try to liquidate in the next few days all the officers from four special departments (237 people), who had access to the secret plans.”<sup>79</sup>

After the letters were published, journalists who had been blacklisted wrote a letter to Almatov. The reporters, to everyone’s astonishment, were invited to the Interior Ministry to meet with deputy minister Alisher Sharafutdinov. He told journalists that “all Internet letters were no more than a disinformation and that [the] ministry [was] not planning any political repressions.”<sup>80</sup> Ironically, the last letter of this series was published just a few days before the events at Andijan. Kommersant Moscow, a Russian news source remarks that the letters were “impressive and trustworthy,” except for the fact that Abdullaev showed a “too obvious a confrontation between” Almatov and Inoyatov.<sup>81</sup> Kommersant Moscow entertains the idea that the Abdullaev letters could have been started by the SNB to discredit the Interior Ministry amidst their competition for Karimov’s “inheritance.”<sup>82</sup>

Not only were events before the massacre indicative of the role that clans played in the massacre, but events following the massacre indicate that it was more than a

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*



grassroots demonstration. Andijan indicates that Karimov was “losing the support of some political elite.”<sup>83</sup> Following the events, Karimov immediately engineered the dismissals of Defense Minister Kadyr Gulomov and Minister of the Interior Zakir Almatov, both from the Samarkand clan. In addition, he dismissed Head of the Joint Headquarters of the Armed Forces Ismail Ergashev, and also a district commander, Kosimali Akhmedov.

These dismissals did not greatly “change the formal system of administration in the security and military structures.”<sup>84</sup> However, their aim was not to change the policy system of the state. They reflected “serious shifts in power relations among regional elites representing their clans” and are the result of Karimov’s personal insecurity as the leader of a clan-based political system. The “cadre reshuffling” that followed the massacre were the result of increasing pressure Karimov felt from powerful clan powers “that used the Andijan events in their attempts to strip the president of his powers.”<sup>85</sup> Karimov’s efforts did not balance clans, but disturbed the existing balance, particularly by removing Almatov and Gulomov, both supported by the Samarkand clan.

### **Akhmad Usmanov**

In October 2006, Karimov nominated his trusted Security Lieutenant Akhmad Usmanov as the new regional hokim and the Kengash unanimously approved of this decision. Previously, Usmanov had served as the Chief of Regional Directorate of Internal Affairs in Nagnagan. Since he has been appointed hokim, he has issued many

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<sup>83</sup> Burnashev, 71.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

restrictions on the Andijan population, including the initiation of a ban against the azan, or call for the Muslim prayer, just one month after his appointment. This demonstrates a heightened level of repression following the massacre in May.

### **Bukhara**

In March 2005, several protestors gathered in Bukhara, citing their dissatisfaction with the worsening living conditions. Despite the fact that these demonstrators succeeded in closing a highway, the regional administration refused to meet with protestors. However, this was before a demonstration in Andijan turned into a complete disaster. When Bukharan protestors demonstrated again in late 2006, they were more successful at bargaining with the regional administration. Protesting started when the District Hokim of Bukhara, Talib Kudratov, sold single stalls at a bazaar to several vendors simultaneously. On December 6, 2006, disheartened Bukharan citizens succeeded in closing off the road that connects Bukhara with Khorezm, and Karakalpakstan with other regions of Uzbekistan. This time, Bukhara Regional Hokim Samoiddin Husenov promised negotiators that he would investigate the issue and then fairly distributed the bazaar stalls.

Unlike the other regions, the living standards in Bukhara are greater than average and “residents do not hesitate to protest or demand what is due them.”<sup>86</sup> However, the Bukhara Hokim also met with protestors from the Jondor district when they cut off the local highway protesting the absence of gas the winter following Andijan. As a result of

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<sup>86</sup> “Several Protest Actions Took Place in the Bukhara Region in Late 2006,” January 15, 2007 <<http://enews.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=1793>> (April 22, 2007.)

their protests, the hokim ensured that the region had access to gas. These two incidences illustrate the shift in the post-Andijan attitudes of the regional and state administration.

More steps are now being taken to invoke fear in the population through strict regulations, such as the outlawing of the azan, and other tactics to keep the population subservient. The already apolitical population is now increasingly afraid of protesting, faced with the fear that another massacre will take place. However, the protests in Bukhara shed light on another aspect of post-Andijan attitudes. By protesting poor economic conditions, steps have been taken to accommodate the needs of the population so things do not escalate like they did in May. Unfortunately, due to the undemocratic nature of both the state and society, the former is much more common than the latter.

### **Samarkand Region**

#### **Mamarizo Nurmuratov**

Mamarizo Nurmuratov was born in the region of Samarkand in 1960. He studied at the Leningrad Institute of Finances and Economics, majoring in economics. In 1982, he joined the teaching staff at the Tashkent Institute of Economy. From 1985 to 1988, he furthered his education at the Moscow Institute of Finances. He then tutored at the Tashkent Institute of Economy, and from 1991 until 1993, he was an Assistant Professor at the Institute. From 1993, Nurmuratov served as the advisor to the chairmen of the Central Bank, director of a research center, assistant and senior assistant chairman of the Central Bank. In 2000, he became Finance Minister. In July 2004, he became Samarkand Hokim and in 2005, Nurmuratov was elected into the Senate of the Oliy Majlis. In December 2006, he offered his resignation as the economic conditions of Samarkand fell.

One commenter says that there were “episodes that did not endear the hokim to the population, but exactly what resulted in the resignation now is anybody’s guess, there are only rumors that the Samarkand hokim is at odds with the presidential administration.”<sup>87</sup> In a state where positions are given out on the basis of loyalty and not merit, being at odds with the President can ruin a political career.

### **Suhrob Abdugafarovich Rafikov**

Suhrob Rafikov was born in 1957. His father is an assistant professor of the Samarkand Medical College, and he himself graduated from the Samarkand State Institute of Architecture and Construction. In 2000, he defended his thesis “Automization of Design of Reconstruction of Old City Buildings.” He is married and the father of three. His politically career began when he became the hokim of the Siab district of Samarkand. When he first took this position, a local newspaper editor commented that Rafikov was “a well-educated and considerate man, a man nice to deal with, which was not exactly typical of state officials of this rank.”<sup>88</sup> However, Rafikov soon proved that he was no different from the other corrupt and ineffective Uzbek officials. Soon, Karimov had him removed from his position as district hokim.

After his dismissal, Rafikov became employed by Parvina and responsible for their construction business. An ambitious politician, it is said that meeting and Azim Usmanov paved the path for his political career. Usmanov, a senior official of the Samarkand regional administration, helped maneuver Rafikov’s promotion to Mayor of

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<sup>87</sup> “Samarkand Regional Leader Relieved of His Duties,” December 13, 2006 <<http://enews.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=1744>> (April 17, 2007.)

<sup>88</sup> “‘Powers-That-Be. Faces’. Mayer of Samarkand Suhrob Rafikov is Close to the Presidnet’s Family and Unavailable to Journalists,” January 19, 2007 <<http://enews.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=1804>> (April 15, 2007.)

Samarkand in August 2005. That same year, Rafikov was elected to the Senate of the Oliy Majlis. When Nurmuratov resigned in 2006, Rafikov was seen as the obvious candidate and appointed the Hokim of Samarkand.

Usmanov not only helped promote Rafikov to Mayor, but also introduced him to Shavkat Mirziyayev, a former regional hokim of Samarkand and the current Prime Minister. Rafikov was also introduced to Gulnara Karimova and became close to the President's family. This "opened the door into big-time politics for the former district administrator."<sup>89</sup> This illustrates how loyalty, not merit, creates and cultivates a politician's career in Uzbekistan. This system of demotion and promotion based on loyalty, or reward and punishment based on clan, is difficult to overcome and encourages constant insecurity within the government.

Economic ties are also important motivators. When Rafikov was appointed Samarkand Hokim, a city reconstruction project was underway to improve the city for its 2,750 Jubilee in 2007. Ironically, Parvina, his former construction company, was very involved in the endeavor. It has been commented that in terms of

whether or not the city is going to benefit from the performance of Rafikov the hokim is something only time will show. [However,] that his relatives and pals have already benefited from it is already common knowledge in Samarkand.<sup>90</sup>

Rafikov's wife, an official at a local museum, drives a Nexia. Furthermore, Rafikov has most of his food, cell phone bills, and medicines paid for, at the expense of the citizens of Samarkand. This illustrates the corruption of politicians and the consequent frustration that is felt being disadvantaged by this system. The question that has been posed is:

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

“how much does the hokim cost the population of Samarkand above the taxes they pay?”<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, how much is he really doing for the region of Samarkand?

### **Secular Opposition – Rare and Weak**

Uzbek Sociologist Bahodir Musayev asserts that “we don’t have public politicians whose personal opinions differ from the opinions of the president.”<sup>92</sup> This presents a huge challenge for creating and fostering political parties. Furthermore, the state does not welcome any form of secular opposition, and the five official political parties that exist do not have a large political following or enough political clout to enact change. When a party does become powerful enough to enact radical change or develops a strong following, it is often outlawed and its members persecuted. Erk and Birlik are important examples of this phenomenon.

Recent persecution of members of the Sunshine Coalition, an organization that unites human rights non-governmental organizations with an Uzbek opposition party, illustrates the intolerance of towards the introduction of alternative or democratic ideas. In December 2005, Nadira Khidoyatova, the coordinator of the Sunshine Fund, was arrested for the second time and accused of economic crimes. This is only days after her husband, a citizen of Turkey and an active member of the Sunshine Coalition, was expelled to Kazakhstan and murdered two weeks later by unidentified men.

### **Is There A Balance?**

When Karimov became the broker of the clan pact in 1991, he began an arduous task of balancing clan interests within the government. Clan balancing is a dynamic and

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> “Uzbekistan: Can Governments Bring Any Change?”

ongoing struggle, forcing one to question how long Karimov can maintain stability before chaos erupts. In 2005, the Tulip Revolution in neighboring Kyrgyzstan forced President Akayev to flee the country. This demonstration of political will by Kyrgyz citizens no doubt incited fear in Karimov's mind. In May of that same year, Uzbekistan experienced its own uprising, and it has been said that clans were the cause. While it may have been a combination of factors, the many reshuffles, promotions, and demotions that Karimov made following the events make it difficult to dispute the role of clans in the Andijan protests. This isn't the first time that clans have acted violently; the 1999 bombings and explosions of 2004 are also attributed by some to be the result of clan conflict between the Tashkent and Samarkand clans. Political reshuffles followed these massacres as well.

### **Is Karimov Winning?**

Two types of loyalty coexist within the Uzbek state: loyalty to clans and loyalty to Karimov. While ordinary citizens may not have a strong sense of loyalty to Karimov, most remain obedient and apolitical. On the other hand, loyalty to Karimov is almost a prerequisite for the political elite who want to be appointed or promoted to a desired governmental position. Once in power, the support of one's clan group becomes almost essential for maintaining that position. These two allegiances, the allegiance to clan and the allegiance to a powerful president, are difficult to supplant. First, how does one break the entrenched tradition of participation in a clan when clan membership has proved so economically and politically beneficial? Secondly, how does one replace loyalty to a strong leader, even if it is only the façade of loyalty?

With each clan-based political maneuver Karimov makes, he proves his political might and personal control over the state. Former Ambassador Murray says that these shifts ensure that there is a “dwindling number of people exercise any real power in Uzbekistan.”<sup>93</sup> Government officials are forced to serve in a system where they constantly fear being demoted or dismissed. In an oppressive government, this does not leave much space for innovative policy-making, demonstrations of political will or social initiatives. This oppressive system helps President Karimov retain his dominance over society and ensure that he consolidates the power of the state in himself, and himself only. A local Samarkand citizen is quoted saying that

practically nothing is known about the hokim himself. The impression that there is only the President in Uzbekistan and nobody else. We know Russian politicians and officials better than our own. Local newspapers do run short publications on state officials every now and then but nobody reads them. Population of the region s half a million people, and the print run of the newspaper Samarkand Vestnik is barely 1,500 copies<sup>94</sup>

This exemplifies Karimov’s efforts to ensure that political officials do not establish a strong following or become too popular. If they do, this can result in their demotion or removal from politics. On the other hand, it is not favorable for a politician to be extremely disliked either. Creating a balance as an anonymous leader who does not invoke dissatisfaction within the society is a challenge but a political must. Karimov is not opposed to removing and replacing officials at his will, efforts that keep politicians dutiful and alert.

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<sup>93</sup> “Uzbekistan: Karimov Appears to Have Political Clans Firmly in Hand.”

<sup>94</sup> “‘Powers-That-Be. Faces’. Mayer of Samarkand Suhrob Rafikov.”



Ruslan Sharipov, an independent journalist from Tashkent who currently lives in the United States, told Radio Free Liberty that he feels President Karimov “benefits from the rivalry most of all.” He adds that the “ongoing rivalry that we are witnessing these day is to the President’s advantage.” However, I disagree that Karimov “can be calmly sitting in his office, watching, and feeling very safe.”<sup>95</sup> In my opinion, one of the biggest motivators for Karimov to reshuffle the government is to compensate for his lack of control. Karimov constantly shuffles the ministry and removes hokims; however, he would not need to resort to such maneuvering if he had complete control over his state. Ultimately, it is his lack of control over the population that forces him to make clan-based political maneuvers.

Not only is Karimov’s position within the state extremely insecure, but the balance between clans is extremely unstable and threatens to erupt at any moment. At the time of independence, clan leaders helped launch Karimov’s career, making him dependent on their support for his success. He continues to participate in political reshuffling in order to secure his position and the stability of the state. Clan politics and Karimov’s participation in this phenomenon is not an illustration of his political control, it is a demonstration of his fragile position as the head of state and broker of clan interests. The system that has been created in Uzbekistan is not durable, and Karimov is “playing a dangerous game.”<sup>96</sup> Not only is Karimov’s personal position within the government at risk, but the stability of society is also threatened. A positive political change must be introduced in the region soon, before clan conflicts explode.

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<sup>95</sup> “Islam Karimov Vs. The Clans.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

## **The New Losers**

Not only has Karimov's attempt to balance clans made his position more precarious, but his attempt to "achieve a balance of power among different political groups...has fueled rivalries even more."<sup>97</sup> It has also created a group of individuals who have been demoted and pushed to the side, and are now very disgruntle and angry. Craig Murray, former British ambassador to Tashkent, argues that klannovopolitka has led to the "emergence of discontented politicians who are now seeking to remove Karimov from office."<sup>98</sup> He deems this group the "New losers" while openly acknowledging the possibility that this group could orchestrate the "violent ouster" of Karimov.<sup>99</sup> More specifically, the New Losers include all of those

who were very close to Karimov a few years ago, many of them have now been thrown out; and, in particular, their economic interest and assets have often been diverted to Gulnora. And now there are a lot of people who used to be very important who now have an interest in seeing Karimov go. So, one definite possibility what we might come to is the palace coup – where he simply gets a bullet in the back of the head.<sup>100</sup>

While this prediction is rather harsh, it is a real possibility amidst the chaos and insecurity engendered by clan-society and klannovayapolitika. In the aftermath of the unexpected death of Turkmenbashi, the dictator of Turkmenistan, this December, a palace coup scenario in Uzbekistan becomes an even more probable possibility.

## **Will the New Losers Win?**

Musaev argues that Karimov's regime is faltering. He believes that the regime is

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> "Uzbekistan: Karimov Appears to Have Political Clans Firmly in Hand."

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

at death's door. I don't know how long the agony will last...But [society] could explode at any moment –triggered by some insignificant event that will then have a chain reaction, people are on edge. The authorities haven't grasped the situation. They don't understand how strong people's desire is and what the people are capable of doing at this moment.<sup>101</sup>

Ironically, Musaev predicts this prior to the massacre at Andijan, an event that definitely shook the structure of the government, but did not devastate it. However, could the state structure withstand another event that devastates the population, disheartens the security services, and revives the resolve and repression of the government? Surviving the events of May 13, 2005 and its aftermath proved to be a difficult challenge, and I don't think that Uzbekistan could handle a similar situation so soon. To exacerbate this precarious state, a presidential election that could spell disaster for the state is looming.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I discussed how Uzbekistan's clan-based society is an undemocratic faction that impedes the creation of a nation-state and hinders the formation of democracy. Clan interests dominate personal and political agendas of much of Uzbekistan's elite. I then analyzed the persona and motivations of recent and current officials within the ministries and top regional positions to demonstrate the role that clans play in Karimov's appointments, dismissals, and the decision-making of top politicians. The research I conducted disproved that these reshuffles and removals are the result of age, education, experience, and political innovation, proving that these are largely inconsequential factors. What matters in Karimov's endless efforts to consolidate his power and stabilize the republic is an individual's loyalty to Karimov and loyalty to clan.

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<sup>101</sup> "Islam Karimov Vs. The Clans."

While I expected to find a main rivalry between the Ferghana, Samarkand, and Tashkent clans, my research led me to conclude that the Samarkand and Tashkent clans have a more distinct rivalry and hold on the state, while the Ferghana clan is weak, relatively ineffective, and may have formed an informal alliance with the Tashkent faction.

My analysis proves that clans have a large degree of influence on the state and affect political decision-making and the distribution of economic resources. Furthermore, I have demonstrated that recent acts of violence within the state, such as the 1999 and 2004 Tashkent bombings and the Andijan Massacre of 2005, have been caused by clan rivalry within Uzbekistan. These isolated incidents demonstrate the competition and violence sowed by clan rivalries. Clan-based society, particularly through members' participation in *klannovayapolitika*, breeds insecurity and large-scale interclan violence threatens to erupt in the future. In Chapter Five, I offer my predictions for the future and introduce policy prescription towards the region, aiming to improve the United States' foreign policy in this region of the world.

## Chapter 5

### Uzbekistan's Future: A Democratic One?

It was announced earlier this morning that President Karimov has passed away. Besides being ill, Karimov was also extremely disliked leader by even those who were in his closest circle, and further investigation into his death is necessary before making an official statement. The possibility that he was ousted from power through a palace coup must be further explored.

Uzbekistan, without its repressive, semi-dictatorial leader has collapsed into chaos. At this very moment the state threatens to collapse. Regional leaders, who already have a large stake in both the national and local governments, have begun the ultimate power struggle: the struggle for Karimov's succession. These well-established leaders have bases of support among their clan members that they will no doubt draw from, proving that they are a serious source of consideration in this fight for the top.

Bailey argues that the institution of clan in Uzbekistan is one that "in the event of succession crisis or regional instability, can catapult the system toward disintegration and chaos."<sup>1</sup> The expiration of Karimov's term as broker of the clans has catapulted Uzbekistan into a land of warring clan factions, and no end is in sight. The two main clan factions, the Samarkand and Tashkent faction, are competing through the channels of the two power ministries, the Interior Ministry and the National Security Services respectively. While restructuring his ministries allowed Karimov to retain much of his power, his endless struggle to balance Uzbekistan's clan factions has fueled the influence

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<sup>1</sup> Bailey, *Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan*, 389.

that clans now have in the struggle for his seat. The SNB and NSS have access to state weaponry and military intelligence, and have shown their lack of inhibitions using force during incidents such as the 2005 Massacre at Andijan. In the power struggle following Karimov's death, Uzbekistan, "whose security organs are the most empowered in Central Asia," faces the eminent danger of large-scale violence.<sup>2</sup>

Uzbekistan's twelve regions are also becoming involved in the struggle. Each region has its own local governments, elected leadership, and distinct identity. With chaos erupting all around, a struggle among these regions for secession from Uzbekistan threatens state breakdown. Uzbekistan already acknowledges the autonomous region of Karakalpakstan, complicating the situation with many of the twelve regional governments now wanting to break off from the state and establish their own government.

Islamic extremist groups have also entered the stage, reconciling their differences seemingly overnight and organizing a large coalition of supporters. Rumors are circulating that these fundamentalists aim to establish a government ruled by Islamic law. Most likely, means to their end will include ruthless force and chaos. The international community looks on in fear as these groups threaten to impose an Iran-like regime amidst the chaos caused by Karimov's passing.

Not only have recent events affected the internal workings of Uzbekistan, but the international community is worried as well. Neighboring Central Asian countries and Afghanistan are preparing for the instability that can and will spread past the borders of

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Uzbekistan. These countries do not have the resources for refugees nor the political will to accept displaced Uzbek people; however, if conflict and chaos continues, Uzbeks will be internally displaced and forced into the other Central Asian countries.

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While this of course is a purely hypothetical situation, the rivalry sown by clans and the resulting instability is not unknown to Uzbekistan and the Central Asian region. If Karimov were to die or be ousted from power, the consequences will be dire. At best, Uzbekistan would be launched into a heightened level of instability, and at worse, the population would face complete chaos and state breakdown. Karimov is sixty-nine years old in a country where life expectancy is 61.5 years and only 4.8 percent of the population is over 65. Furthermore, he has rumored poor health and, according to the constitution, cannot run in the upcoming presidential election. Clan rivalries could lead to state breakdown in the very near future and must be examined.

### **Succession: Elections or Palace Coup?**

Turkmenistan, the most autocratic Central Asian republic, was ruled by Saparmurat Atayevich Niyazov from 1985 until December 21, 2006. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Niyazov, also referred to as Turkmenbashi, or Leader of the Turks, filled the void of national identity by building “a nation and a culture based on him.”<sup>3</sup> As the self-declared President for Life, Niyazov’s dictatorial reign over Turkmenistan ended in December, when he suddenly died of cardiac arrest. However, many have questioned the possibility that this was a palace coup, carried out quietly by those closest

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<sup>3</sup> “Turkmenbashi Everywhere,” CBS News, January 4, 2004  
<<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/12/31/60minutes/main590913.shtml>> (April 25, 2007.)

to Niyazov. These recent events shed light on the political dynamics of a clan-based society and klannovayapolitika.

Sean Roberts, current Central Asian Affair Fellow at Georgetown University, predicts that the “cloud of secrecy” surrounding Turkmenbashi’s sudden death invoked fear in Central Asia current leadership.<sup>4</sup> The possibility that Turkmenbashi was murdered as a part of a palace coup is no doubt troublesome for Central Asia’s authoritarian leadership, particularly President Karimov. The Interior Ministry and SNB are powerful political foes, adding to the mixture of the “authoritarian regime nature of the clan, the kinship patronage system and the firm civilian control of [Uzbekistan’s] military.”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Uzbekistan has a much larger population, more incidents of Islamic radicalism, and less economic resources than Turkmenistan. Sean Roberts concludes that

If Turkmenistan’s succession seems thus far to be a relatively copasetic agreement between a few power brokers in a smoky room over cognac, Uzbekistan’s transition in leadership could look much messier.<sup>6</sup>

After Turkmenbashi’s death, his politically corrupt and overly involved family did not discuss matters of his succession. Roberts points out that this “must make Karimov wonder about the position of his own family once he has left the scene.”<sup>7</sup> Karimov’s daughter Gulnara is very powerful and believed to control the gas, oil, and

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<sup>4</sup> “The Roberts Report on Central Asia.”

<sup>5</sup> Leena Pillai, “Uzbekistan after Karimov,” *Strategic Foresight Group* October 2005 <<http://www.strategicforesight.com/uzbekafterkarimov.htm>> (April 20, 2007.)

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> “The Roberts Report on Central Asia.”



telecommunication businesses; however, she is not a popular individual.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Karimov has been able to remain the “sole repository of power in the most strategic and populous state in the region,” and has not appointed an heir apparent as his replacement.<sup>9</sup> With the lack of a strong and united political opposition, and the common belief that “anyone who dares to try to claim the presidency risks his life,”<sup>10</sup> is it possible that Karimov will appoint his own successor? With Uzbekistan’s disunited opposition, Cohen proposes that a “pro-Karimov could have a chance to succeed him.”<sup>11</sup> This will not only help Karimov maintain his legacy, but will also protect him from persecution for crimes committed while in office. Karimov, who saw his second term expire on January 22 remains at the helm of the Uzbek state and “silent” about the upcoming December 23<sup>rd</sup> election.<sup>12</sup> As of late, there has been little political activity to prepare for these elections or to appoint a successor.

Not only is there no apparent successor in line, but the class of “New Losers” is growing, as more and more politicians are reshuffled in Karimov’s endless effort to balance the clans. Particularly after May 2005, Karimov purged his ministries and cracked down on Uzbek citizens. Sevgeny Zhovtis argues that Uzbekistan is “rapidly moving toward a Turkmen-type of dictatorship...in terms of control and of the violation

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<sup>8</sup> “Uzbekistan: Karimov Appears to Have Political Clans Firmly in Hand,” August 31, 2006  
<<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/08/970cdfca-adb7-4c9c-856b-526cef00273b.html>> (April 17, 2007.)

<sup>9</sup> Akerman, 6.

<sup>10</sup> “Week at a Glance (31 May – 5 June),” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty June 8, 2005  
<<http://www.rferl.org/reports/centralasia/2005/06/21-080605.asp>> (April 27, 2007.)

<sup>11</sup> “Understanding Uzbekistan.”

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

of political and civil rights.”<sup>13</sup> This is creating a lot of silent unrest within the country and has made identifying Karimov’s most potent enemies an ambiguous process. At this point, it is not only important to explore what would result from a leadership change in Uzbekistan, but also what a change in leadership would be.

Prior to the events of Andijan, it seemed as if both Almatov and Rustam Inoyatov were the two most important leaders within the political system. These two influential military leaders were also thought as probable successors of Karimov, either by election or through appointment. Many were speculating throughout 2005 that Almatov and his Samarkand clan were emerging as the more powerful faction. Ruslan Sharipov, an independent journalist from Tashkent, believed that Almatov’s control over Uzbekistan’s huge and ruthless police force made him the “most dangerous figure for President Karimov.”<sup>14</sup> However, Almatov’s removal from his post as Interior Minister eliminated a powerful presidential successor and ensured that the SNB is now the more powerful faction.

### **Why does Uzbekistan maintain a Soviet-like autocracy?**

While Islam Karimov directed the Uzbek state into an authoritarian system, its citizenry has maintained the system. When Uzbekistan was rapidly ushered into independence in 1991, Karimov and his autocratic rule were welcomed to ensure the stability of the republic. At this point, attempts were made to create allegiance to an Uzbek nation. Despite the fact that almost 80 percent of the state is ethnically Uzbek,

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<sup>13</sup> Gulnoza Saidazimova, “Central Asia: HRW Highlights Uzbekistan’s ‘Disastrous’ Human Rights Situation,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty January 19, 2006  
<<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/01/98c908d2-0c65-4c5f-bab8-6cd9f1b9d344.html>> (April 27, 2007.)

<sup>14</sup> “Islam Karimov Vs. The Clans.”

attempts at fostering a national allegiance, a prerequisite for democracy, proved futile. The institution of clans is responsible for hampering most of these efforts and divisive, exclusive and intolerant clan factions threaten to destabilize the state. As clan rivalries continue to dominate local, regional, and national politics, Uzbekistan is averted from emerging as a strong democratic nation. In order to democratize Uzbekistan, efforts must be made to democratize both the state and society.

### **Klannovayapolitika and Democracy**

A clan-based society must be incorporated into the state if democratization is to take hold. Frederick Starr refers to Central Asia's "dual political systems."<sup>15</sup> Within these systems, there exists both "Politics A" and "Politics B." Politics A, Starr explains, is the standard relationship between the president and the parliament. While this relationship exists in Central Asia, the state is dominated by Politics B, which is the struggle between the presidents, parties, parliaments and clans. In order to create a more democratic society, it is imperative that Politics B is merged closer to Politics A. As clan leaders and regional elites are elected and appointed to national positions, it is inevitable that they will start to feel part of the nation. They will undergo what Starr refers to as a "civic education," making them more invested in the Uzbek 'nation.'<sup>16</sup>

Ella Ackerman similarly concludes that "any democratization process is highly dependent on the ability and willingness of Central Asian governments to establish a power equation that incorporates traditional elites and new political forces."<sup>17</sup> While

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<sup>15</sup> Starr, 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>17</sup> Ella Akerman, "Power and Wealth in Central Asian Politics: Clan Structures versus Democratisation," Conflict Studies Research Centre, May 2002: 1.

clans cannot be used as vehicles to democratize, they can be gradually incorporated into a democratic system. Various studies indicate that Uzbekistan's citizenry is participating more and more in the state. If this trend continues and participation is fostered through parliamentary elections, political parties, and other social organizations, clan alliances will become less central to members' identity. This creates space for the growth of a national sentiment.

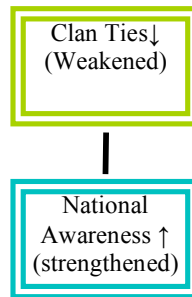


Figure 4

Uzbekistan's young and vibrant population has the potential to create a more democratic future, and a better education system will help. It is important that the international community encourage the reinstatement of study abroad programs to the United States and countries of the European Union, introducing many students to democratic ideals and encouraging them to participate in their own government. And, while studying abroad programs are important, it is imperative to improve Uzbekistan's domestic education system, particularly in the rural areas. Solely focusing on improving study abroad programs will only "succeed in helping to develop a narrow band of secular western-trained potential elites, largely trained abroad, [who] will be wholly alien from the society they seek to govern."<sup>18</sup> Instead, the international community must support the

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

education system of Uzbekistan, providing funds and incentives to improve the curriculum and teachers' salaries.

Uzbekistan's young population presents a great challenge to the Uzbek community and also a great source of promise. If the Uzbek state is unable to develop economically and socially, than this population, without adequate health, education and employment opportunities can become quite dissatisfied. In an area of the world with an increasingly disheartened population and more frequent incidences of Islamic insurgency, young unemployed males are a great sector of society to recruit for radical groups. The international community must provide the necessary resources, funding, and incentives to raise the living standard within Uzbekistan in order to thwart this unnecessary violence.

The international community mustn't shun Uzbekistan, despite the fact that the Karimov regime is repressive and constantly violates human rights. The state is currently unable to provide adequate education, health care, and employment opportunities, and these handicaps do not encourage the formation of a democratic government.

Uzbekistan's young population is "more globally savvy than was ever envisioned 15 years ago."<sup>19</sup> This highlights the importance of motivating this large population in a positive direct, particularly through adequate educational, employment, and training opportunities. These efforts can help introduce democratic values into Uzbek society. Provided with the right circumstances, the current youth could be at the helm of Uzbekistan's future democratic transition.

### **Parliament**

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

While Central Asian Parliaments are often dismissed as ‘puppets’ of Central Asian presidents, many look towards parliamentary elections as effective “agents for positive change”<sup>20</sup> Presidential elections are much less apt to promote democratic values and introduce political change into society. Often, the ability to weaken political parties, eliminate political opponents, and stuff ballot boxes makes presidential elections the “least likely agents of positive evolutionary change.”<sup>21</sup> It is important that we look past the presidential elections of 2007 towards the parliamentary elections of 2009 as a source of “steady, evolutionary progress”<sup>22</sup> that can eventually bring positive democratic change.

Starr argues that parliamentary elections have the “greatest potential for advancing the concept of citizenship with the least threat to overall stability.”<sup>23</sup> The parliamentary process still “helps create a political class and concept of citizenship that is independent both of the authoritarian rulers and of the clans.”<sup>24</sup> The 2004 parliamentary elections in Uzbekistan, though deemed flawed by the OSCE, were less flawed than the previous 1999 elections. This shows that the parliamentary process is progressing, and the 2004 elections included improvements such as published statements released by all five parties and a televised debate among candidates. If anything, these events help raise the political awareness of society and introduce the political elite to a more national, democratic political stage. “Even quasi-parliamentary bodies introduce thousands of

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<sup>20</sup> Starr, 18.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

members of the political class and even larger numbers of ordinary citizens to the idea that government should be responsive and responsible to the people.”<sup>25</sup>

While clan groups are largely represented in Uzbekistan’s parliament, this is not a historical anomaly. Starr asserts that the French parliament prior to the French Revolution and the British parliament before the Reform Bill of 1832 were largely dominated by narrow, regional interests. However, these representative bodies were still able to play a “significant role in the development of representative government in their country”<sup>26</sup> Participation in the formal structure of government, even if it is participation based on clan support, can encourage individuals to invest in the state and help the emergence of a truly representative government. Even if an individual is appointed by Karimov or chosen in a flawed election his or her participation in the parliament can help forge state and national identity in a country where this is lacking. More often than not, “normal parliamentary processes set in motion developments that...favor democratization.”<sup>27</sup> Once a national leader

acquires an office, a government telephone, a visiting card identifying him as a member of parliament, and a conspicuous badge for his lapel, he comes to view himself differently. Visits from foreign parliamentarians, participation in national and international conference, and appearances on local television all serve to reinforce the delegate’s view of himself as a significant element in the national political process, no longer a mere *subject* but a true *public citizen*.”<sup>28</sup>

Even if this individual is involved in a clan, participation in the state still raises a national awareness that cannot be raised in clan society. Thus, it becomes important to stress

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

more participation in the state and less participation in clan ties. The international community can accomplish this by providing the state the necessary resources to distribute to its citizens in order to legitimize the state and raise the living standard of the population.

### **Parties**

Official political parties within Central Asia should be fostered by the international community in order to enhance their support and salience within society. While Karimov has formed five, pro-government parties, these parties are still involved in the government and participate in politics. While nowhere near a democratic entity, these parties can develop “slowly and steadily” and be used to “challenge dubious restrictions imposed by the government, and, when improprieties occur, to turn for help to the international monitoring organizations and both national and international media in order to advance their claims against the government.”<sup>29</sup> Through communication with the government and the outside community, political parties can foster a network of understanding. As parties continue to evolve, they are creating the social capital and gaining the support of the masses.

As an international community, it is important to realize who a party attracts and work from there. Even though the parties were a top-down creation of the regime, they were still required to define their political program and attract their constituencies. By realizing who each party attracts and what is on its political agenda, it will be easier for the international community to create appropriate incentives and channel the right

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.



messages the media. This can incorporate clan interests and clan members into more formal channels of the state, eventually fostering larger sentiments of national allegiance.

### **The Uzbek People**

Seiple argues that stability in Uzbekistan is a “function of three constituencies: key ministers, major clan networks, and, increasingly, the people.”<sup>30</sup> When Karimov became President, Uzbekistan was experiencing a time of insecurity and his control over the state was welcomed. However, his control over these three constituencies, even the people, has been dwindling. Outside of Uzbekistan, the recent color revolutions in many of the post-Soviet states, particularly the Tulip Revolution in neighboring Kyrgyzstan, have proved that the masses are finished living under autocratic rulers and repressive regime. Within Uzbekistan, recent demonstrations have proved that the masses are tired of being repressed. In addition, many courageous individuals have emerged to fight against human rights abuses and for a brighter future. These human rights activists, political protestors, and journalists often risk losing their lives. These individuals offer hope that the people of Uzbekistan do want to change their future, and they want that change to be more democratic.

### **The New Great Game**

Today, the Great Game is still being played, with many powerful nations vying to exert their influence over the five Central Asian republics. The United States, Russia, the European Union, and China all exercise some degree of economic, political, and social control over the region. Today, with more players and more interests in Central Asia,

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<sup>30</sup> Seiple, “Understanding Uzbekistan.”

such as the extrapolation of energy resources and human rights concerns, foreign policy vis-à-vis Central Asia has become much more complicated. However, the international community can encourage Tashkent to “prepare the fertile ground for a population that has never known democratic rule, and to introduce and instill the fundamentals of constitutional liberalism, including respect for civil liberties.”<sup>31</sup> The United States, as a powerful global entity, is a potential political role model for promoting peaceful relations and positive change throughout the region.

After the events of September 11, 2001, Central Asia began to hold a very strategic geopolitical position for the United States. Karimov allowed the United States to construct a military base in Uzbekistan, which the United States used to invade Afghanistan. President Bush subsequently launched his global war on terror, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is included on his list of terrorist organizations. With President Karimov seemingly cracking down on Islamic fundamentalism through his rhetoric and his actions, Washington and Tashkent developed friendly relations.

At this point, the United States overlooked many of Uzbekistan’s human rights faults. However, after the Andijan Massacre of 2005, the United States and the European Union took sharp stands against Uzbekistan’s violent actions. This prompted Uzbekistan’s foreign policy to shift sharply towards Russia, which supported the government crackdown. Uzbekistan and Russia “found a common ground in despising ‘colored revolutions’ and Western attempts to democratize the post-Soviet space.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Bailey, *Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan*, 394.

<sup>32</sup> Rustam Burnashev and Irina Chernykh, “Changes in Uzbekistan’s Military Policy after the Andijan Events,” *China and Eurasian Forum Quarterly*, 5. 1, 2007: 72.

Soon, the United States' airbase was being shut down, and Russia was being invited to construct an airbase instead. In June 2006, Uzbekistan rejoined the Collective Security Treaty Organization and increased its involvement in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The United States does not presently have many short-term political or economic resources dedicated to this region of the world. Compared with Iran, Iraq and North Korea, Uzbekistan does not present an imminent threat, yet, it is still crucial that the United States invest in this region. US involvement in Uzbekistan and the Central Asian region should focus on long-term goals, such as raising the living standard of its people, preventing human rights violation, and introducing liberal values into a society that has no historical basis for democracy. These goals will help stabilize the region and secure the United States' economic interest in Central Asia.

It is important that the US approach the region realistically, acknowledging the Central Asian societies are based on clan groups that are able to infiltrate the formal political sphere. Clan politics is “virtually invisible to outsiders” and “frustratingly elusive.”<sup>33</sup> However, once US policy makers and diplomats are made aware of how clan society works and what factors to look for, policies towards a clan-based society become much more effective. Dr. Martha Brill Olcott advises the Helsinki Commission that the United States “will improve the effectiveness of [its] policies if we are better aware of the circumstances on the ground in Uzbekistan, as well as some the potential undesired but in

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<sup>33</sup> Starr, 7.

some cases easily predictable outcomes of our policies.”<sup>34</sup> If US policy-makers approach the current political situation in Central Asia with the attitude that Uzbekistan is “hostile to democracy,”<sup>35</sup> they are hindering their success at innovating new policies and creating incentives that encourage political change. Similarly, the United States cannot approach its policies vis-à-vis Central Asia as it would approach the European Union, nor can the United States expect the same reception.

The United States must be creative in its approach, and make sure that its efforts and its resources are applied in the most effective way. It is important that the United States not approach the current regime with a restrictive or confrontational attitude. Karimov has proved that he does not need the cooperation of the United States or the European Union to act on the global stage. After Western criticism for the events at Andijan, Karimov turned eastward and received both Russia and China’s support. It is not in the United States’ interest to push Uzbekistan further into relations with these undemocratic states. The US must adopt a more flexible policy towards Uzbekistan, so that we can forge a relationship that aims at accomplishing our long-term goals in the area while improving the living standards of the Uzbek population.

### **Conclusion: Evolution Not Revolution**

In Uzbekistan, the process of democratization should be a process of evolution, not revolution. The state is too unstable and inherently weak to support a revolution. Olcott reiterates that Uzbekistan will not be a country that “import[s] a political

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<sup>34</sup> Olcott, “Prospects for Political Change.”

<sup>35</sup> Starr, 6.

revolution.”<sup>36</sup> Uzbekistan’s own political opposition is too weak, and opposition inside and outside of the country is disjointed. Furthermore, a revolution forced by a United States’ foreign policy move is also unfavorable. The events of Andijan have had a negative affect on “elite support for change” and “closet reformers have dug down deeper into anonymity, venting their displeasure in ever smaller circles.”<sup>37</sup> The political atmosphere is uncertain and dangerous, and if the United States were to export a revolution, it would not be widely supported.

Political change in Uzbekistan is not impossible, but it will be challenging, frustrating and at times extremely discouraging. However, as clan members are encouraged to participate more in politics, through elections, the parliamentary process, and political parties, it is quite possible that these individuals will begin to feel like citizens of Uzbekistan. As individuals identify more with the state, clan identities will decrease, which will help nation-building efforts and eventually the development of democracy (see figure 4). While not eliminating entirely clan identity, adding other key forms of identity, such as identity in the Uzbek state, makes nation-building a more straightforward process and can lead to the introduction of democratic society.

### **The Bigger Picture**

According to Guillermo O’Donnell, in politics of the developing world, informal organizations, such as clans, are “where the most interesting and critical elements of politics in the developing world take place.”<sup>38</sup> This study has aimed at deciphering the

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<sup>36</sup> Olcott, “Prospects for Political Change.”

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Collins, “The Logic,” 226.

degree of influence that clans in Uzbekistan exert on the political sphere of the state and how this phenomenon affects future democratization. However, clans are not only central in Uzbekistan, but strong regional networks are central in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and the other four Central Asian republics, and “have long dominated the politics of each country.”<sup>39</sup>

Kathleen Collins suggests that “we look beneath and within formal institutions and systematically integrate informal organizations and informal policies into our study of political order.”<sup>40</sup> Initially, I presented models that are useful for studying the Uzbek case, and extrapolated what repercussions and political consequences this phenomenon of *klannovayapolitika* presents for a recently independent state within the larger international system. With many theorists deducing that clans are an enduring feature of society and a lasting influence on politics, this study becomes even more important for the future of the Central Asian region and the international system. My analysis did not only encompass clans in Uzbekistan, but also offered insight into the current situation of the other four Central Asian republics. Furthermore, many of the themes that the clan-based society of Uzbekistan presents, particularly manifestations of clan within the formal government, are applicable to other African, Asian, and Middle Eastern societies.

In his article on Uzbek civil society article, Seiple poses the question: “Are the blind talking to the deaf?”<sup>41</sup> This harsh rhetoric illustrates the frustrations of working with a clan-based society in today’s international system. Uzbekistan’s short-term

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<sup>39</sup> Starr, 5.

<sup>40</sup> Collins, “The Logic,” 261.

<sup>41</sup> Chris Seiple, “Uzbekistan: Civil Society in the Heartland,” *Orbis*, Spring 2002: 259

stability rides on the outcomes of Karimov's succession, and its long-term stability depends on the ability of its clan-based society to adapt more democratic features, foster a sense of nationalism, and democratize the state. It is crucial to incorporate informal networks and clan loyalties into the formal state structure of Uzbekistan. Earlier in this chapter, I predicted that any change in national leadership would lead to instability at best and state breakdown at worst. With the recent passing of Turkmenbashi, the second anniversary of Andijan in May, and the upcoming presidential in December, it is important that the international community begin understanding the facets of clans and klannovayapolitika in Uzbekistan so that future instability, chaos, and state breakdown can be avoided.

## Appendix A: Partial Chronology<sup>1</sup>

ca. 710	First Central Asian cities fall to Arab Muslims
1206	Genghis Khan recognized as leader of Turko-Mongol people
1220	Genghis Khan demolishes Samarkand, Bukhara
1227	Genghis Khan dies
ca. 1320	Marco Polo travels through Central Asia
1336	Timur born
1370	Timur ascendant
1405	Timur dies
ca. 1445	Uzbeks push into Central Asia
1447	Ulugh-bek assumes Timurid throne
1449	Ulugh-bek assassinated
1502	Last Khan of Golden Horde dies
1506	Timurid dynasty ends
ca 1580	Discovery of alternate trade routes to China begins to damage Central Asian trade
1812	Napoleon defeated; hostilities between Russia and England begin
1839	British invade Afghanistan
1841	Retreating British slaughtered in Afghanistan
1865	Russians capture Tashkent
1868	Russians capture Samarkand Bukhara made protectorate of Russia
1873	Russians capture Khiva
1876	Russians capture Kokand Khanate, rename it Ferghana
1907	Anglo-Russian Convention—The Great Game's official end
1917	Bolshevik Revolution Russian Civil War begins
1924	Russian Civil War ends Central Asian Soviet republics created Lenin dies
1928	Ferghana Valley <i>basmachis</i> uprising finally crushed by Soviets
ca. 1930	Collectivization begins Central Asia sealed off by Stalin
1931	Tashkent named capital of Uzbek SSR
1936	Karakalpakistan ceded to Uzbek SSR
1937	Great Terror reaches its height
1953	Stalin dies
1959	Sharaf Rashidov becomes First Secretary of Uzbekistan's Communist Party

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted from Tom Bissell, *Chasing the Sea: Lost Among the Ghosts of Empire in Central Asia*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003).



ca. 1970	Cotton Scandal begins
1982	Brezhnev dies
ca. 1983	Cotton Scandal unravels
1983	Sharaf Rashidov dies
1985	Gorbachev becomes First Secretary
1988	Birlik founded
1991	USSR collapses
	Uzbekistan declares independence from USSR
1992	Tajikistan Civil War begins
1997	Tajikistan Civil War ends
1998	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan founded
1999	Tashkent truck-bombed

**Appendix B:** General Timeline of Clan Dominance during the Soviet era<sup>1</sup>

<b>TIME PERIOD</b>	<b>RULING CLAN FACTION</b>
after 1938	The Jadids from Bukhara were purged by the Soviet Union; the Tashkent-Ferghana faction comes to dominate.
1959-83	Sharaf Rashidov and the Samarkand faction ruled
1984-1989	After the death of Rashidov, the Tashkent-Ferghana faction dominates once again.
1989	The political ascendancy of Karimov guarantees that the Samarkand clan is restored to power.

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted from Chris Seiple, "Uzbekistan: Civil Society in the Heartland," Orbis. Spring 2002: 252.

### Appendix C: Regional Map of Uzbekistan<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection

**Appendix D: Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Uzbekistan<sup>1</sup>**

President	Islam Karimov*
Chairman, Supreme Assembly (Oliy Majlis)	Erkin Halilov
Prime Minister	Shavkat Mirziyyayev*
Deputy Prime Minister	Abdullah Aripov
Deputy Prime Minister	Rustam Azimov**
Deputy Prime Minister	Svetlana Inamavo
Deputy Prime Minister	Rustam Kasymov
Deputy Prime Minister	Nodirkhon Khanov
Deputy Prime Minister	Ergash Shaismatov
Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources	Sayfiddin Ismoilov
Minister of Culture and Sports	Alisher Azizkhojayev*
Minister of Defense	Ruslan Mirzayev**
Minister of Economics	Vyacheslav Golyshev
Minister of Emergency Situations	Bakhtiyor Subanov
Minister of Finance	Rustam Azimov**
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Vladimir Norov
Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Investments, and Trade	Elyor Ganiev**
Minister of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education	Rustam Kasymov
Minister of Internal Affairs	Bahodir Matlubov
Minister of Justice	Buritosh Mustafaev*
Minister of Labor and Social Security	Akin Abidov
Minister of Public Education	Turobjon Jorayev
Minister of Public Health	Feruz Nazirov
Secretary of National Security Council	Murod Atayev
Chief of Staff, Presidential Administration	Zilemkhon Haidarov* (Khaidorov)
Chairman of State Bank	Fayzulla Mullajanov
Chairman of National Bank for Foreign Economic Activity	Rahimov Borievich
Chairman of National Security Service (NSS)	Rustam Inoyatov,** <i>Col. Gen.</i>
Ambassador to the US	Abdulaziz Kamilov
Permanent Representative to the UN, New York	Alisher Vohidov

\* Important Player from the Samarkand Clan

\*\* Important Player from the Tashkent Clan

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<sup>1</sup> CIA last updated 7/17/2006

## **Glossary**

**Yuri Andropov:** Andropov became the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1982. Instead of fostering clan loyalties, Andropov used the KGB as a mechanism to eliminate the influence of clans on society. This drastic policy shift challenged the institution of clans, but did not shatter it.

**Apparatchik** - Apparatchiks were leaders within the Soviet Party structure.

**Basmachis** – Basmachis fought against the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War. Many Jadids supported their struggle.

**Leonid Brezhnev** – First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from ... to his death on November 10, 1982. During his twenty-five year reign, Brezhnev had followed policies that both ignored and fostered clan loyalties. Soviet policy vis-à-vis clan in Central Asia was drastically reversed after his death.

**CPSU** – The Communist Party of the Soviet Union

**Communist Party of Uzbekistan** – The Communist Party of Uzbekistan was penetrated by clan interests and became a powerful link between state and society.

**CIS** – The Commonwealth of Independent states is a conglomeration of former Soviet republics that was founded to coordinate economic integration and development.

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan are all members of the CIS.

**Cotton Scandal** – In 1983, the Uzbek Cotton Scandal unfolded as Soviet leadership uncovered the intricate clan-based networks that existed within the political and economic sectors of Uzbekistan. This led to a widespread purge of indigenous elites that lasted until 1988.

**Mikhail Gorbachev** – The last First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev carried on the purge of politically and economically powerful individuals in Central Asia. Central Asian clan groups were extremely resistant to Gorbachev's policy initiatives and locally referred to his policies of perestroika and glasnost as krasnyi desant, or the "red landing."

**Hokim** – The twelve regions of Uzbekistan, Karakalpakstan, and the city of Tashkent each possess a hokim, or governor. President Karimov appoints each regional hokim, who then appoint city and district hokims. Each hokim serves as the Chairman of the Majlis in his region and acts as the head of the hokimiyat, or local executive branch.

**Islam Karimov** – Islam Karimov was born in Samarkand and moved himself up in the ranks of the Uzbek-Soviet system. In 1989, Karimov was elected First Secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan and in 1991, he became Uzbekistan's first President. Karimov was initially supported as the broker of a clan pact, and continues to reshuffle the political elite in order to balance clan interests and secure his own omnipotence. His second and final term expired January 22, 2007, and much awaits presidential elections scheduled for this December.

**Jadid** – The Jadids were a young intelligentsia who were inspired by the Young Turk movement in Turkey and who stressed education. At the time of the Russian Revolution, the Jadids divided; some chose reform over religion and joined the Bolsheviks, while others chose to support religion over reform and joined the basmachis. Most Jadids were eliminated in the purges of the 1930s.

**Klannovayapolitika** – Clan politics is a phenomenon experienced in Uzbekistan, where many political maneuvers are made based on securing a clan balance and not on improving the current situation within the state.

**Kolkhoz** – The kolkhoz, or collective farm, was a Soviet policy implementation that actually helped strengthen clan and regional ties. Instead of eliminating existing solidarity groups, the kolkhoz provided the structure for clans to persist and helped maintain the dominance of informal networks.

**Mahalla** – During the Soviet era, Uzbekistan experienced higher levels of urbanization. However, this did not destroy clan ties. Clan members moved to cities together, forming neighborhoods known as mahallas. Within these mahallas, clan connections reinforced informal social, economic, and political networks.

**Majlis** – Each of the twelve regions, Karakalpakstan and the city of Tashkent possess a majlis, or council. Council members are directly elected through regional elections.

**MVD** – The Interior Ministry of Uzbekistan, one of the two most powerful national ministries. The MVD is supported by the Samarkand clan and is a rival of the SNB.

**Oblast** – Uzbekistan has twelve oblasts, or regions: Andijan, Bukhara, Djizak, Ferghana, Kashka-Darya, Khoresm, Navoi, Namangan, Samarkand, Surhan-Darya, Syr-Darya, and Tashkent.

**Oliy Majlis** – The Oliy Majlis is Uzbekistan's highest legislative body. The Oliy Majlis is divided into two chambers, the Legislative Chamber and the Senate. Representatives of the Oliy Majlis are directly elected by the people and serve a five-year term. Karimov appoints sixteen members to the Senate. Today, the Oliy Majlis contains two-hundred and fifty representatives, one from each electoral region and this body initiates legislation and authorizes executive policies, holding at least two sessions per year.



**SCO** – The Shanghai Cooperation Organization focuses on security, economic and cultural cooperation. Uzbekistan joined the Shanghai Five - Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan - in 2001, resulting in the organization's new name.

**SNB** – The National Security Council, led by General Rustam Inoyatov, is supported by the Tashkent clan and a rival of the Interior Ministry.

**Titular groups** – The national group that lives within a state can also be referred to as that state's titular group. In Uzbekistan, around eighty percent of the population is ethnically Uzbek.

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